

1. **The Canons**

1.1 Canons E4, 5 and 6 regulate the Ministry of Readers

1.2 Canon E4 states that ‘a lay person, whether man or woman,... may be admitted by the bishop of the diocese to the office of reader in the Church and licensed by him to perform the duties which may lawfully be performed.’

1.3 It goes on to say that it shall be lawful for a Reader:

- (a) to visit the sick, to read and pray with them, to teach in Sunday School and elsewhere, and generally to undertake such pastoral and educational work and to give such assistance to any minister as the bishop may direct;
- (b) during the time of divine service to read Morning and Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution), to publish banns of marriage at Morning and Evening Prayer (on occasions on which a layman is permitted by the statute law so to do, and in accordance with the requirements of that law), to read the word of God, to preach, to catechize the children, and to receive and present the offerings of the people;
- (c) to distribute the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to the people.

The bishop may also authorize a reader to bury the dead or read the burial service before, at or after a cremation but only, in each case, with the goodwill of the persons responsible and at the invitation of the minister of a parish or an extra-parochial place.’

- 1.4 Canon E5 speaks about the nomination and admission of Readers and paragraph 3 is of some note:
‘No person shall be admitted to the office of reader in the Church except it be found on examination, held by the bishop or by competent persons appointed by the bishops for this purpose, that he possesses a sufficient knowledge of Holy Scripture and of the doctrine and worship of the Church of England as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, that he is able to read the services of the Church plainly, distinctly, audibly, and reverently, and that he is capable both of teaching and preaching.’
- 1.5 Canon E6 is of the licensing of readers