

Participant-Minister Categories

Things minister-participants often do after covenanting with the congregational minister	Things participating ministers should avoid or only do when explicitly asked by the congregation's minister	The Middle Ground These kinds of activities are often specifically negotiated in the covenant, or are covered, under a "please ask before saying yes"
Attend worship and other public events like memorial services, public lectures or concerts	Anything that signifies lack of support for the congregation's minister, lay leadership, or church policies. (no factions, no triangles, no criticizing, no listening to criticism.)	Quasi-ministerial leadership such as any appearance in worship, leading a discussion or support group, teaching a class in the adult program, speaking at a Women's Group event, etc.
Participate in social activities like lunch bunch, elders groups, potlucks, interest groups (hiking club.), taking care not to be a ministerial presence or an authority about the congregation	Accepting a major leadership position or involvement in congregational policy such as, elected office, Long Range Planning Team, policy creation teams, Bylaws revision, Personnel, Finance (generally be a worker bee, not a leader)	Activities that are "under" a staff person, such as RE teacher, youth leader, or Choir president. (These staff persons may not feel completely free to supervise your work, or you may be stepping into a conflict with their supervisor, your colleague.)
Participate in music or art groups like choirs, join with other members at public witness events.	Conducting worship (even when asked by the Worship Committee) or Rites of Passage for members of the congregation (including at church weekends or at a public venue or private home)	Taking leadership of short term projects or teams such as rummage sales, year-end picnics, planning the new memorial garden, etc. Participating in groups or situations which are or have been centers of dissension, conflict with the leadership, or bad behavior.
Support the congregation's goals, policies, leadership, and minister's authority, taking the responsibility to avoid conversations if they are not happy.	Serve on the Board, COM, Healthy Community Team, Ministerial Relations Committee and the like which could put the two ministers into public conflict. Participating in a small group or meeting the congregation's minister is present at or leading (a workshop, say) without notifying/asking permission	Doing things that might count as pastoral care, for anyone in the congregation, without checking in. (Remember the terrible power of, "I got a condolence card from the minister emerita, but our senior minister? oh, no!")
Volunteer in the congregation's community service projects(e.g. Food Pantry) and Public Witness events.	Say anything implying that you speak for the congregation or its ministry in the public sphere (without explicit permission)	NOTES: Context is everything. It is usually fine to sing in the choir, but if the choir is a hotbed of angst about your colleague, your colleague might reasonably ask you not to. A participation minister will want to be open to all reasonable requests, but

		there should be a good reason for requests to limit your participation. If you feel you are being unfairly limited in your participation, you can request Good Offices help.
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