

# 'EQUIP' : a peer group mentoring programme for church leaders

## Responding to your needs

ReSource sees a vital part of its brief as encouraging and challenging churches and their leaders into fruitfulness. It is our privilege to visit and minister in all kinds of churches, and we are delighted to find that so many are renewed in the Spirit and active in mission. It clearly is possible for a church to be effective and fruitful in this country. However, many of our churches are not experiencing this fruitfulness; many are not managing to open themselves to the Spirit and find themselves preoccupied with maintenance rather than mission.



We are constantly asking ourselves what kind of contribution we can offer that will make a difference. Our new ReSource mentoring programme, EQUIP, is headed up by Roger Morgan.

At present EQUIP is running in the South West (centred on Wells) and in the North West (centred on Chester). We hope to develop a third centre in Yorkshire. EQUIP will be for church leaders of Anglican Churches or their equivalents in other denominations.

## The task of a church leader

It's easy to look at the scriptures and see what the task of a church leader is. Every church leader has the same clearly defined mission. He or she is sent to bear witness to the people living in their locality, often (but not always) defined by parish boundaries. With God's help, which we believe is always available, the result of this witness will always be new believers who must then be baptised and then filled by the Holy Spirit as we pray for them. As more and more are reached the result will be a Spirit-filled community; this community will then join with the church leader in the task and will reach further people. EQUIP is open to all church leaders who are excited by this vision and are longing to see it increasingly fulfilled in the locality into which God has placed them.

This is the biblical vision; but in our culture realising it is far from easy. The main reason is that when a new church leader arrives in the parish he or she often finds a starting position which is far from ideal. The church buildings may be quite unsuitable, the diocesan structures may seem to hinder rather than support, and the congregation may not as individuals yet be alive in the Spirit. In these circumstances it is all too easy to lose sight of the vision. The aim of EQUIP will be to help leaders stay on track and then win through so that an empowered, missional church emerges.

## EQUIP – what we offer

EQUIP South West will be led by Roger Morgan and Mike Edson. Mike has recently retired from his job as Vicar of Bideford and has himself led fruitful churches. He was Archdeacon of Leicester for several years before he returned to parish life; before that he was Warden of Lee Abbey; Mike now lives in Barnstaple. EQUIP North West will be led by John Benson, recently returned to this country after 20 years in the Diocese of Singapore. During these years he has served as Vicar of St George's Church, Dean of Cambodia, Director of Training, and Vicar of Chapel of the Resurrection.

Members of EQUIP will commit themselves to three meetings per year in February/March, June/July and October/November. These dates will be agreed by consultation with all the members but once they are set the members agree to give the meetings the highest possible priority. John, Mike and Roger will additionally commit to visiting each of the members in their own locality at least once between the three main meetings.

At the main meetings we will cover the following areas together:

**1. Life**

We will do all that we can to ensure that each member of EQUIP is alive in Jesus, filled by his love and equipped with his power. More than this, we will aim that all the congregations associated with EQUIP are alive, overflowing with praise, using all kinds of spiritual gifts, devoted to prayer, to the sacraments, and to the scriptures demonstrating sacrificial love and generosity.

**2. Confidence**

We will aim in EQUIP to build each other's confidence and to build the confidence of our congregations. We will aim for leaders and churches which believe that they have the truth and believe that as they live out this truth and share it with the world God will always add to our numbers from amongst those who are seeking after truth.

**3. Space**

In EQUIP we will encourage each other and help each other to find a good balance between work and rest. We will find a time to pray, time to plan, time to prepare things properly, time for our families, time to enjoy God's creation. We will aim for congregations who enjoy God, enjoy worship, enjoy prayer, enjoy taking in the word of God, enjoy living -in our ideal world we and all the people we serve will abound with thanksgiving.

**4. Vision**

We will encourage each other to develop a clear sense of what God is going to do in the immediate future of our lives and in the lives of our congregations. How can a congregation find its vision? How can the vision be maintained? How can the vision be celebrated? We will all have a vision for renewed churches and effective evangelism, but we expect the shape of this will vary from one place to another.

**5. Skills**

Being a church leader is like any other job – it requires specific skills. Preaching a sermon, managing a PCC, leading worship, one on one ministry with individuals, managing a church's finances etc. – none of this is easy. Some of this may be provided by Diocesan and other training, but often it is not. At EQUIP we will aim to offer training and share expertise in key skills so that we may all work more effectively.

**6. Courage**

Courage is essential if we are to be effective leaders, and EQUIP will aim to help us develop and maintain this courage. A church leader has to have the courage to persist in preaching the whole counsel of God, knowing that some of what we are called to say is unpalatable. Sometimes progress in our churches is blocked by particular individuals who occupy key roles in an unhelpful way. It takes courage to move them. Sometimes it's the church programme which needs to be changed. Sometimes the problem is the way buildings are used, or the buildings themselves.

**7. Teamwork**

Many incumbents and leaders operate as one man (or woman) bands. They are often fruitful - but there is a ceiling to how much they can achieve. The biblical perspective is of the local church as a team, with each person contributing to the mission of the church. By authorising some lay people as ministers and not others the Church of England may seem in practice to be denying this principle. At EQUIP we will talk a lot about how to mobilise the entire congregation.

## 8. Money

Jesus taught more about money than about any other subject. Anxiety about money is often the main reason why churches fail to grow, with energy that ought to go on mission being dissipated on endless fundraising. At EQUIP we will help each other to manage money well, to teach the importance of generosity and sacrifice and to look for God's boundless provision.

### How EQUIP works in practice

If you choose to join EQUIP at any of its centres you will be committing yourself as follows:-

- To three 1 day meetings per year which you promise to treat as highest possible priority.
- To welcoming the centre leaders to your churches and to making the most of the visits.
- To taking the teaching that comes from EQUIP seriously.
- To doing everything you can to support the work of the other members of your group within EQUIP.
- To be aware of the need ReSource has for funds. There will not be a fee for belonging to EQUIP but we hope that you will find ways of contributing to our finances, for example by helping to sell our publications, making an annual or monthly gift from your church to ReSource or paying a fee to ReSource for particular services given to your churches.
- Leaders may join with a centre if they live within 1½ hours travelling distance.

### How to join EQUIP

We hope that EQUIP will be a way of enabling leaders and churches of all types to grow and become effective in ways which remain faithful to their own traditions and situations. If you are interested in joining in with EQUIP please contact Roger by email at [office@resource-arm.net](mailto:office@resource-arm.net) or by ringing us on 01749 672860.



EQUIP is part of the ministry of ReSource  
*Renewal for mission in the power of the Holy Spirit*

ReSource, 13 Sadler St, Wells, Somerset BA5 2RR  
01749 672860  
[office@resource-arm.net](mailto:office@resource-arm.net)  
[www.resource-arm.net](http://www.resource-arm.net)