

# Join us to pray for the Anglican future

Anglican Futures, as our name suggests, is focused on the future.

Praying for the future of the church can be daunting but we hope these prayer sheets will help. They are designed to be used by individuals, small groups or churches. They are undated to allow them to be used at different times in different places. You can find suggestions of some of these ways on our website.

Looking ahead, things may well be messy, but we are convinced that the greatest challenge for our generation is not, "How do we respond to heterodox church leaders?", though that is important, but the holiness with which we treat our brothers and sisters whose conscience leads them to take a different path. So, our prayer is that we start by allowing God to challenge our own hearts, and then pray for the church.

## What's your focus?

The Anglican Church is global, national, regional and local. There are faithful Anglicans seeking to make a difference at all levels - here are just some of the groups involved.

Global: *Global South Fellowship of Anglicans, Gafcon, EFAC, Anglican Network in Europe*

National: *CEEC, Church Society, Gafcon GBE, Evangelical Fellowship Church in Wales*

Regional: *Many dioceses have an evangelical group - known as a DEF or DEU*

Or you may feel called to pray for the future of your local Anglican church.

## Why 1 Corinthians?

In 2006, the leaders of two churches in the USA, The Falls Church and Truro Church, produced a guidebook called, "[40 Days of Discernment](https://americananglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/40-Days-of-Discernment.pdf)." They involved colleagues from the Diocese of Virginia and across the Anglican Communion. The guide was designed to help parishes consider their future in The Episcopal Church through a time of prayer, fasting and small group discussion. <https://americananglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/40-Days-of-Discernment.pdf>

With the permission of the Anglican American Council, we have been inspired by their material, as we have sought to prepare something more suited to those in the UK and Europe in 2023. We are grateful for their wisdom and the ACNA BCP 2019 for prayers.



Find out more about Anglican Futures

[www.anglicanfutures.org](http://www.anglicanfutures.org)

[info@anglicanfutures.org](mailto:info@anglicanfutures.org) or 07851596888

Offering practical and pastoral support to faithful Anglicans

# Week 4: A Devoted Church

Since the Reformation, Anglicans in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been in a privileged position. The bishops have sat in the House of Lords, the parish church has been at the heart of the community and most people appreciated the way Anglican doctrine shaped the values of the country. But as our culture is changing, there is a danger the bishops are leading the church away from their commitment to these key distinctives of Anglican thinking:

**A biblical church** - Article 5 speaks of the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation and while many speak of Hooker's three-legged stool (Scripture, Tradition and Reason) he placed it in context, "*What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience are due.*" Sadly, some now promote 'Experience' to first place.

**A liturgical church** - the doctrine of the Anglican church is found in our liturgy (the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal) rather than a set 'confession'. The BCP soaks the congregation in Scripture and reminds them of grace: best practice ensures that the Word of God is truly preached and the sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper) are rightly administered, centred around the doctrine of justification by faith.

'Commended' prayers and pick and mix services have allowed error to creep in.

**An episcopal church** - the responsibility for teaching, discipline and selecting leaders for ordination is given to bishops, rather than the local presbyter or congregation. They should unite the church by teaching truth and driving away error.

**A pastoral church** - the 'parish' system and services of baptism, marriage and burial have provided a biblical framework for pastoral interaction at key points in the lives of the local community as well as the gathered congregation.

**A missional church** - since the 18th Century the Anglican Church has sent missionaries across the world. Our parishes and congregations have always been outward looking.

**A historical church** - the Reformation sought to correct the errors of Rome and return to the teaching of the apostolic catholic church. A right understanding of the place of 'Tradition' should in turn correct our C21st arrogance.

**A global church** - every local church will be affected by their local culture. The global aspect of the Anglican tradition should help to correct our post-modern western arrogance, if only we would listen to the concerns of the Global South.





# Praying For A (Not-So) Devoted Church



*We hope you will be helped to pray for the future of the church by taking time to read the bible passage (perhaps asking two simple questions - What does it teach me about God? What does it teach me about his church?) and by using the suggested prayers to begin to shape your own thanksgiving and petition.*

Day 1	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 7:1-16
	<b>Reflect:</b> Paul is not afraid to be counter cultural. Against the backdrop of the messy, sexual immoral church and culture, Paul commends the Corinthians to live out their calling - neither sexually indulgent outside of marriage nor ascetic within.
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, of your goodness, give me yourself, for you are enough for me. I can ask for nothing less that is completely to your honour, and if I do ask anything less, I shall always be in want. Only in you I have all. Amen. (Julian of Norwich)

Day 2	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 7:17-24
	<b>Reflect:</b> More counter-cultural teaching - God is with the Corinthians whatever their cultural background (circumcision/non-circumcision), economic status (slave/free) or relationship (marriage/singleness). Contentment is possible.
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 3	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 7:25-40
	<b>Reflect:</b> Time is short (29-31) and our lives, whether we currently experience the gift of marriage or the gift of celibacy, should be characterised by fully devoted service to the Lord. Are we as honest as Paul about marriage's 'worldly troubles'?
	<b>Pray:</b> Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people, that bringing forth in abundance the fruit of good works, they may be abundantly rewarded when our Saviour Jesus Christ comes to restore all things; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 4	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 8:1-13
	<b>Reflect:</b> It is interesting to see that respecting another's conscience requires the Corinthian church to abstain from something that is 'good' rather than allow that which is 'questionable.' Are we using our freedom in ways that damages others?
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, your never-failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and on earth: Put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things that are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
Day 5	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 9:1-18
	<b>Reflect:</b> Ministers of the gospel have the 'right' to make a living by the gospel (14) but Paul's priority is to be able to preach the gospel freely, without financial reward getting in the way. Which challenge do we need to hear today?
	<b>Pray:</b> Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, as we live among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
Day 6	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 9:19-23
	<b>Reflect:</b> Paul's accommodation to those who need to hear the gospel is not the compromise of self-indulgence, or lowered standards, but the willingness to waive his rights and comforts for the sake of others. How might we do the same?
	<b>Pray:</b> Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honour of your Name. Amen.
Day 7	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 9:24-27
	<b>Reflect:</b> Why was Paul was willing to sacrifice his privilege, comfort, security and safety to follow Christ, serve the Lord and share the gospel with others? His eyes were fixed on the imperishable prize - the crown of victory. Is that true of us?
	<b>Pray:</b> Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and as we are sorely hindered by our sins from running the race that is set before us, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.