

# 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 5: A Loving Church

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor 13:4-7)*

Real love is costly.

As Christians we are called to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and to love others as ourselves. What has that meant for brothers and sisters in other parts of the world? What might it mean for us?

Will we love God and his people more than our comfort and status? If he calls us to, are we prepared to leave behind buildings, homes, brothers and sisters?

Will we risk being social pariahs or losing lucrative contracts because we love God and his people? Will we endure hardship, poor housing, less good schools, reduced job opportunities?

Will we put aside our 'preferences' and 'prejudices' to unite with brothers and sisters from a different tradition or background?

Will we create loving communities where all are welcome and where all accept our need of grace?

Will we celebrate wrongdoing or celebrate truth?

Will we bear with one another? Will we accept a style of service that others value more than we do? Will we sacrifice status for the good of the church community?

Will we give generously to enable gospel ministry to flourish - even if we don't control it?

Will we grieve the things we have lost, while joyfully holding onto that which God has given, rather than resent what we do not have?

Will we love others whose conscience leads them to take a different path to us - will we be patient and kind with them? Will we avoid insisting on our own way? Will we desist from resenting their success or rejoicing in their failure?

Pray that the current crisis causes us all to become more loving.





# Praying for a loving 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 10:1-11:1
	<b>Reflect:</b> A stark warning. Despite their privilege, their experience of God’s presence, God’s power and God’s provision, the people of Israel lost their reward by indulging in idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God or grumbling.
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, the protector of all those who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy, that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 2	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 11:2-16
	<b>Reflect:</b> As Paul turns to questions about corporate worship, it seems that once again the Corinthians are abusing the freedom they have in Christ - with actions which blur the created distinction between men and women. Are we the same?
	<b>Pray:</b> O Almighty God, you pour out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 3	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 11:17-34
	<b>Reflect:</b> The Corinthians are making a mockery of the Lord’s Supper by their arrogance and their factions. How might our elitism or self-centred disregard for others prevent a right representation of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus?
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, without whose beauty and goodness our souls are unfed, without whose truth our reason withers: Consecrate our lives to your will, giving us such purity of heart, such depth of faith, and such steadfastness of purpose, that in time we may come to think your own thoughts after you; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Day 4	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 12:1-11
	<b>Reflect:</b> As a church we often seek unity in conformity. These words remind us of the wonderful diversity of gifts that God bestows on the church by his Holy Spirit; gifts given for the common good and to be used in the service of others.
	<b>Pray:</b> Grant us, O Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who can do no good thing apart from you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; 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 12:12-31a
	<b>Reflect:</b> The individualistic attitudes of the Corinthian church continue to play havoc so Paul reminds them that the church is a body, made up of many members, brought together under the Lordship of Christ. Do we need to hear the same?
	<b>Pray:</b> Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical Body of your Son: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Day 6	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 12:31b-13:7
	<b>Reflect:</b> Love is not an abstract virtue or a romantic notion. Love requires self-sacrificial service of others for the long haul. It also does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in truth. Will our church be known as truly loving?
	<b>Pray:</b> O Lord, you have taught us that without love, all our deeds are worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you; grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Day 7	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 13:8-13
	<b>Reflect:</b> The Corinthians may have been impressed by ‘upfront’ gifts but Paul reminds us that they will fade away - God is looking at our hearts. Let us hold on to what we know in part as we look forward to seeing God face to face.
	<b>Pray:</b> Almighty God, give us the increase of faith, hope, and love; and, that we may obtain what you have promised, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.