

Members discuss living well together

Led by Bishop Andrew, Synod members had the opportunity to consider a new resource from the Church of England's Pastoral Advisory Group entitled 'Pastoral Principles for living well together'.

Bishop Andrew told Synod:

"The Pastoral Advisory Group supports and advises dioceses on pastoral responses, especially to issues that arise concerning LGBTI+ clergy and lay people. It runs alongside the project known as Living in Love and Faith, which some of you will have heard about - a programme designed to enable the church to engage positively, and as one body - with questions of love, sexuality, marriage and gender.

"As we know, perspectives on gender, identity and sexuality are evolving and the Church wants to explore these matters by studying what the Bible, theology, and our culture are teaching us.

"The pastoral principles have been offered to the bishops of the Church of England, who feel that these are a potentially valuable resources, not only as a teaching aid for issues of gender and sexuality, but for broader aspects of our conversations together as Christians."

These Pastoral Principles invite church communities to examine afresh their life together. The focus relates to LGBTI+ people, but they apply to all sorts of difference and diversity among God's people. They are commended by the House of Bishops for the dioceses and parishes of the Church of England.

The Bishops' hope and prayer is that they will be used by clergy and laity with responsibility for welcome and pastoral care in the church and as a resource for discipleship and study groups in all churches.

The Bishop's hope that paying attention to them will help church communities to live out the good news of welcome to all people with its biblical understanding of new birth, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the common call to repentance and faith, and our new identity in Christ.

Synod were shown a short film ([link here](#)), before members broke up into groups to discuss the six pastoral principles, which are:

1. Acknowledge prejudice
2. Speak into silence
3. Address ignorance
4. Cast out fear
5. Admit hypocrisy
6. Pay attention to power

As the principles were discussed, members were called to act in LOVE:

L isten attentively and openly
O pen your heart and mind without judgmentalism
V alue everyone's vulnerability and perspective
E xpress concern and empathy

More about the 'Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together' [here](#).