

# 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, Gafcon GBE, Church Society, 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

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Offering practical and pastoral support to faithful Anglicans

# Week 2: Praying for a mature church

According to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer, the Archbishop presents every new Bishop with a Bible, saying:

*"GIVE heed unto reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this Book. Be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Take heed unto thyself, and to doctrine, and be diligent in doing them: for by so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be so merciful, that ye be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy: that when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye may receive the never-fading crown of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

Many provinces around the world continue to use a modern version of this charge - but some have made changes.

Some avoid the warning of the danger of the bishop becoming a wolf, despite Paul's concern in Acts 20:29. Some minimise the charge to discipline the flock. Yet without godly discipline, how will error be driven away? How can the church be 'sanctified in the truth' as Jesus prayed (John 17:19)? If everyone can do as they see fit, how can unity be maintained?

It could be argued that the chaos in the Anglican Communion, and many individual provinces, can be traced back to a lack of godly discipline. Again and again we have seen bishops and archbishops undermining rather than guarding the truth by avoiding the call to discipline those who commend teaching and actions that are incompatible with Scripture. In the UK, we have seen the repurposing the baptism liturgy to mark a person's gender transition (CofE), the introduction of blessings of same-sex relationships (CinW) and same-sex marriage (SEC). Individual bishops have turned a blind eye to heretical teaching and ungodly practice - including numerous safeguarding failures.

Let us pray for our bishops that even now they would repent of their inaction, and take up their canonical duty to 'to teach and to uphold sound and wholesome doctrine, and to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange opinions'.





# Praying for a mature 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 3:1-4
	<b>Reflect:</b> Paul does not pull any punches. The Corinthian church is immature and their immaturity is shown by their 'jealousy and strife' and their propensity to follow individual leaders. Are we tempted to behave 'only in a human way'?
	<b>Pray:</b> Set us free, loving Father, from the bondage of our sins, and in your goodness and mercy give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in our Saviour Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Day 2	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 3:5-9
	<b>Reflect:</b> There is a subtle balance here in Paul's words. The work of planting and watering is not 'nothing' - faithful work will be rewarded - BUT it is God who assigns the tasks and gives the growth. Surely, a challenge and a comfort.
	<b>Pray:</b> Keep your Church, O Lord, by your perpetual mercy; and because without you the frailty of our nature causes us to fall, keep us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable for our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 3	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 3:10-17
	<b>Reflect:</b> There will come a day when our works will be shown for what they are - tiny precious jewels or papier-mâché artifices. Even the most precious metals will be refined. But we are saved by grace alone. Again, a challenge and a comfort.
	<b>Pray:</b> Go before us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favour, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, through your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 4	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 3:18-22
	<b>Reflect:</b> The Corinthians think they can protect themselves with wise ideas and crafty plans - yet Paul shows it is futile. How easily we become caught up with the wisdom of this world and miss the riches that are already ours in Christ Jesus.
	<b>Pray:</b> O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Day 5	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 4:1-7
	<b>Reflect:</b> Again there is a subtle balance. Paul does not fear the judgement of man but he is clear there is a day coming when all will be revealed - including the hidden acts and secret motives of all our hearts. How do we respond to this?
	<b>Pray:</b> Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen
Day 6	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 4:8-13
	<b>Reflect:</b> In their foolishness, the Corinthians boast of all they have - presuming that these 'blessings' are proof of their greatness. Paul boasts only in the suffering of the faithful. How much are we prepared to endure for the sake of the gospel?
	<b>Pray:</b> Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Day 7	<b>Read:</b> 1 Cor 4:14-21
	<b>Reflect:</b> Paul has had to say some hard things to the Corinthian church, but he is clear this is because he loves them and takes seriously his responsibility to drive away error and discipline those under his care. Don't we all need leaders like this?
	<b>Pray:</b> O God, by your grace your servant Paul, kindled by the flame of your love, became a burning and shining light in your Church, turning pride into humility and error into truth: Grant that we may be set aflame with the same spirit of love and discipline, and walk before you as children of light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.