

The Church of England's General Synod has approved legislation increasing flexibility for worship schedules in multi-parish benefices.

At its February meeting, Synod voted strongly in support of changes allowing churches in group ministry to rotate services without explicit permission.

Existing legislation had required that Morning and Evening Prayer be said each day in every church and Holy Communion be held each week in every church.

Under the new legislation, the same services need only need be held in one church within a benefice, at the same regularity.

This normalises the already widespread practice of services moving from church to church within a benefice on consecutive days and weeks.

Such arrangements had previously required special dispensation from a bishop, which will no longer be required.

A spokesperson for the Church of England said: "Sunday worship continues to be central to the Church of England's ministry, but this change is designed to make life easier for multi-church benefices."

"Larger benefices are a reality, particularly in rural areas, and this legislation allows schedules to be set within a local context, alongside other forms of worship not covered by this legislation."

"Morning and Evening prayer continue to be the heartbeat of church life, and whether urban or rural, communities are prayed for on a daily basis."

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