

The Five Guiding Principles

Guidance for Candidates for Ordination in the Church of England

In July 2014 legislation was passed to enable women to be consecrated to the episcopate in the Church of England. This means that the Church of England is now fully committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender. The Church of England also remains committed to ensuring that those who cannot receive the ministry of women priests or bishops are able to flourish. The House of Bishops has therefore agreed *Five Guiding Principles* as the basis for this mutual flourishing. From January 2015, all candidates coming to a BAP are required to give their assent to all of the *Five Guiding Principles*. The House of Bishops confirm that the *Principles* need to be read 'one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively.' The *Five Guiding Principles* are:

- Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
- Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

Under Criterion B (Ministry within the Church of England) you are required to confirm that you assent to all five of these *Principles* and, in the Sponsoring papers that your DDO will write for you in preparation for your attending a Bishops' Advisory Panel, he or she is required to acknowledge your assent to these *Principles*.

You will be asked again for your assent to these *Principles* by your College or Course Principal when you come to the end of your ordination training. The Course or College Principal will ask this in order to provide an assurance for your sponsoring and ordaining Bishop.

**Stephen Ferns
November 2014**