

GENERAL SYNOD

DEVELOPING DISCIPLESHIP

Discussion and reflection in small groups

In preparation for the Synod debate on discipleship, members have the opportunity in groups to discuss “Developing Discipleship” and to share in reflection on the meaning and the significance of being a disciple. The purpose of the group work is to enrich the debate which follows through learning from one another, sharing our reflections and seeing perspectives other than our own. It also provides a context where members can reflect both on broader issues about discipleship in the Church of England and the wider Church and on their own commitment and experience as disciples.

Scriptural foundations

One or more of these brief passages may be used at the start of the group work for silent reflection or to encourage sharing of insight and wisdom.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”.
(Matthew 28.19-20)

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it”. *(Luke 9.21-22)*

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” *(Romans 12.1-2)*

Discussion

The questions overleaf are provided in order to prompt discussion. There is no requirement to complete the list of questions nor are groups expected to make a formal report.

Since in the Synod timetable the groups meet between the presentations about the Task Groups on the Tuesday evening and the ‘ACT’ groups scheduled for 11.20 to 1.00pm, it may be that the discussion moves naturally to the subject of the Task Groups. It is for the group to decide how best to spend its time. However, it is hoped that individuals who speak in the debate on discipleship will use the insights gained in the group work to contribute to the Synod discussion.

If the group wishes to make a statement or comment arising from its discussion, this can be recorded on this sheet and handed in at the desk in Bishop Partridge Hall.

Questions

Discipleship as learning, following Christ and living a transformed life

Q1. Which aspects of being a disciple do you see as well represented in the life of our church?
Which are less evident?

The formation and sustaining of disciples

Q2. What key experiences and opportunities have helped to form you as a disciple? What helps to sustain you in your discipleship?

Q3. How far can we plan and organise for the formation and sustaining of disciples in the life of the church? What does our own experience tell us?

Discipleship in the contemporary Church of England

Q4. What do you particularly value in the traditions we inherit which shape our understanding of discipleship? In a time of rapid change and against the background of wide difference between generations and cultures, what must remain and what should change in our understanding?

Q5. “The biggest obstacle to lay development is the clericalised culture of church and ministry.” Do you agree? If so, how should we address this obstacle?

Our debate

Q6. What areas of interest do you want the debate to cover?

Q7. What do you hope will flow from the debate in terms of policy for the church, or change of attitude, or a renewal of commitment to discipleship as a key dimension of our church’s life?

Comment/statement from the group to the Bishop of Sheffield

*You are invited to feedback comments and statements **on the issues around discipleship** to help those who will take this agenda forward. Please record them here and hand this paper (and the attached continuation sheet where needed) to staff at the Information desk in Bishop Partridge Hall. Please reserve **feedback on the process of the group work** and give this in the usual way via the Clerk to the Synod – jacqui.philips@churchofengland.org*

Thank you for participating in the group discussion and for your feedback.

Notes/Continuation sheet