

A brief introduction to the implementation of Setting God's People Free

Setting God's People Free is an initiative across the Church of England to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday. This is not a 'top down' initiative with a centralised programme but a coordinated effort to change our culture as a church – locally and nationally – to more clearly recognise, and more effectively resource, the faith of ordinary Christians in everyday life. Over the next few years, hundreds of worshipping communities, fresh expressions of church, and work-based and other small groups will be involved in helping discover what really does help us live out our faith confidently in everyday life.

The word discipleship means different things to different people. Some prefer to use the term faith formation. A disciple is simply someone who is actively seeking to know Jesus more deeply by learning to love and live this relationship out in every area of life. Discipleship is about the discovery of our baptismal identity and fundamental to our participation in the Church and the Kingdom of God. The outworking of our discipleship is different for different people. There is no hierarchy to the roles or functions that we fulfil in following God's call – in God's eyes at least!

However, we can often feel that there is a hierarchy. This is part of the culture shift that SGPF is seeking to address – the experience that in church some ways of expressing our faith are 'better' than others. This is one of the key changes we need to make in our culture (see the SGPF report for more on this). Of course, the Church does need people to serve in running the buildings, services, projects and activities that serve God's ministry and mission. Involvement in the life of the Church is part of our faith in action – but only a part. A huge number of lay people serve in the ministry and leadership of the Church but many more hold positions of influence beyond the gathered church in the home, community, workplace, and across society. Therefore, we need to enable every member of our congregations – lay and clergy alike – to follow Jesus confidently wherever they are.

A key priority is supporting the implementation of SGPF in dioceses and worshipping communities:

- 25 dioceses in three learning communities (DLCs). Each diocese is embedding the culture shifts called for in SGPF into their own vision and plans.
- Over 300 parishes and worshipping communities will be engaged in piloting activities that enable and support discipleship and lay leadership.
- Facilitating information sharing and training events in dioceses across the country.
- Support to analyse and assess the impact of new approaches and resources

A second priority is providing resources to help culture change around discipleship and faith in everyday life.



The **Set Free For** series offers small steps to a big difference; beginning with how church can affirm faith across the week. Future titles will focus on faith in the home, in school, college and at work. The **Free Thinking** range supports these by offering theological reflections on expressing faith in everyday life. These resources are available at: www.churchprinthub.org

For more on SGPF, to sign up for our influencers mailing list, and to access the **Set Free For** and **Free Thinking** resources, visit: www.churchofengland.org/sgpf

