

Setting God's People Free for... **every day** **faith**



So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NRSVA)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As part of our diocesan strategy we are seeking to liberate and encourage lay ministry, both within and outside the church community. This is the national agenda set out in the 'Setting God's People Free' report.

To take this forward in our diocese, there will be resources and ideas provided as part of the Year of Prayer and the Year of Vocation, and a special gathering for lay champions and clergy to help promote a culture of every day faith.

Please discuss the suggestions in this booklet in your parish and appoint a 'lay champion' to take this forward.

With thanks for our partnership in the gospel.

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner
Bishop of Chichester



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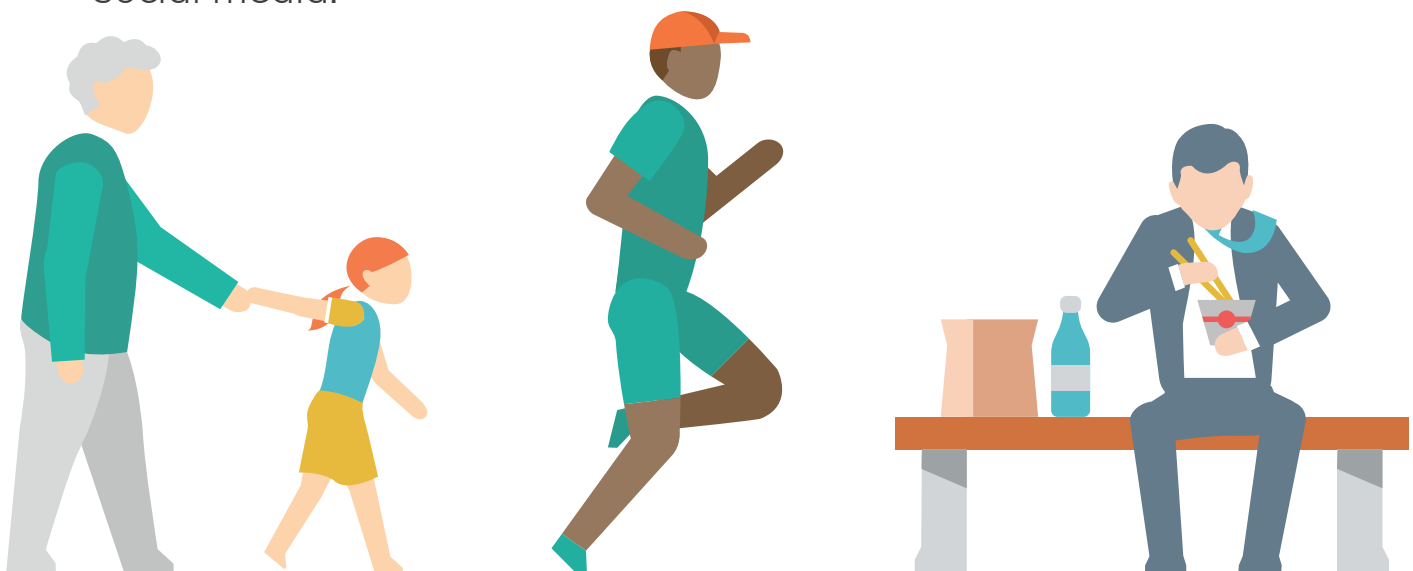
Getting Started: Small shifts to a big difference

Church life can be busy - whether we have a leadership role in a church, undertake slots on various rotas or are simply trying to juggle all the demands on our time. The gathered life and worship of a church is a vital expression of our faith, but how can this time together better nurture our life of faith across the week? In amongst the busyness of doing church, how can we take steps together to shift our thinking and focus on being the church? How can those with responsibility to lead better envision and empower our congregations – adults and children – to see opportunities to live out the way of Christ Sunday to Saturday? How can we all be more confident in living a life of faith such as this? This might seem a daunting task, or more things on a busy list. This, however, is not the case. Small shifts in what you are doing already can make a big difference in the enabling of such faith.



In this Setting God's People Free For... we look at tried and tested ways to achieve this shift. These seven small steps are not about adding new things to meetings, or adding new meetings, but about doing the things we already do in a slightly different way. These changes are things all members of congregations should be involved in; though it might often be down to lay and ordained leaders to determine what steps to take first. Over the last ten years, LICC has been learning from people in scores of churches in dioceses from Carlisle to Truro. These seven ideas have proved helpful to churches of all sizes and traditions. Wherever you are on the journey – whether you're looking for ways your church could open the doors of people's imagination, or for ways of ensuring that the vision becomes a reality over the long haul – you'll find something to help you.

What works in one church may not work in another, but ideas have a way of sparking more ideas and leading you to find something that fits your congregation perfectly. Of course, there are other ideas out there, so please share what you've been trying and learning with others in your community, diocese and more widely through social media.



1. Be Curious: Ask Different Questions



One of the big things that some leaders and many members of congregations have discovered is that they know much less about what's going in people's Monday to Saturday lives than they thought and have shown much less interest than they imagined. So ask people questions about where they spend their time during the week.

For example:

- What are your challenges?
- What are your opportunities?
- What could I pray?

And, over time, perhaps more probing questions:

- What is God teaching you there?
- What might God want you to be involved with there?
- What do you want to tell the rest of our church?

Those in leadership roles have an important role in shaping a culture of curiosity. Encouraging our leaders – clergy, wardens, readers and PCC members – to initiate conversations over coffee after the service or in their home groups that focus more on where people are during the week is a help. And see if after a few months you hear other people initiating these conversations and following up on previous ones!

And don't restrict the questions or conversations to adults. Talking with our children and young people about their school life, hobbies and interests, and their challenges and opportunities is also crucial.

Being curious can also help to form part of a good culture of welcome. We can be very good at being curious when new people arrive – wondering where they have come from, what has brought them here and what they do in their lives. However, once they've settled in, instead of moving to how they can help in the life of the church, why not find out first how we can get behind them, what might they benefit from?

Changing our conversations is one of the quickest ways to change the direction of our culture. Talking more about our everyday lives, and where we see God in these, is the first step to a big difference in sharing our Sunday to Saturday faith.



2. Visit People in Context

Many clergy have found that the single most helpful action they can take to encourage a culture of everyday faith is visiting a church member in their workplace. This is one of the most helpful ways of affirming wider Christian vocations. It also helps clergy see where their congregation are during the week, what it's like, the kind of people they're with. Not only does this honour the people being visited, it can also spark completely different kinds of conversations, build a closer relationship with the person visited and almost always adds to the store of illustrations and applications for sermons!

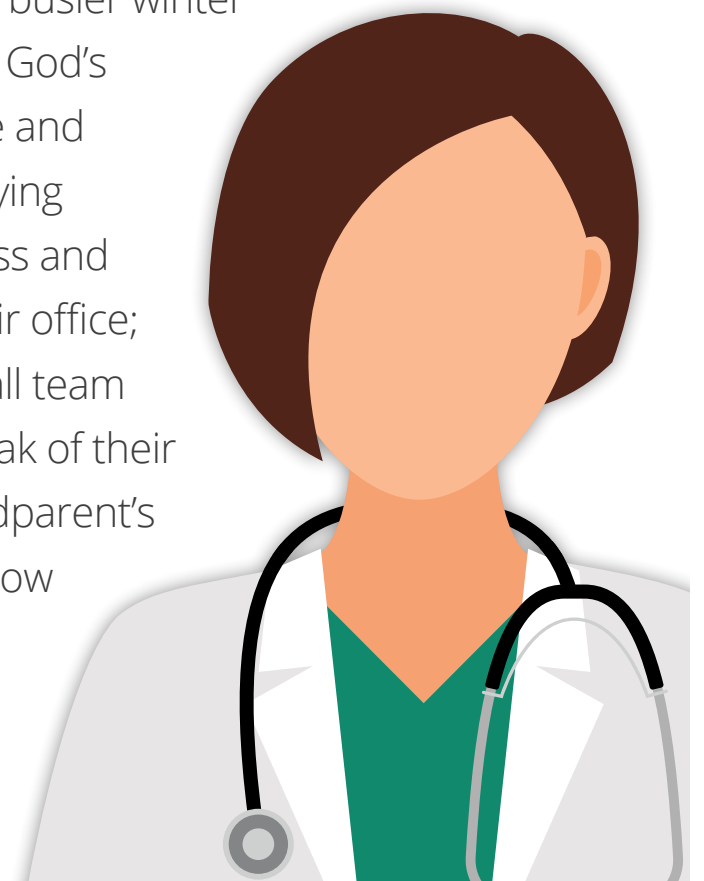
It does require clergy to adjust their time, but you can begin small – once every six weeks or so. You may well find it's so rewarding that you increase the frequency. Perhaps you don't even need a reason for a conversation – why not invite your vicar to lunch in your school, factory or office!? Of course, anyone with time can do this, not only clergy, wardens, readers, deacons or home-group leaders. Perhaps we could all do a bit more visiting (instead of meeting).



3. Sunday Praying for Monday to Saturday Living

When praying changes, so do hearts. Of course, you can integrate a whole-life perspective into any every element of a Sunday service but the intercessions is the most obvious moment; praying for people in particular sectors week by week, or for occupations or school activities that people in your church are in, perhaps beginning with successive letters of the alphabet – 'D' is for dad, driver, dentist, dancer, designer, design & technology lessons etc.

Similarly, think about broadening out prayers for particular people's pressing needs to include their missional opportunities – not just praying for a nurse under pressure in the busier winter months but also how s/he might draw on God's resources and find ways to minister grace and love to colleagues as well as patients; praying for someone's patience with a difficult boss and how they might change the culture of their office; praying for a young person in their football team that the way they go about things will speak of their Christian faith; not just praying for a grandparent's health but that they might find ways to show and share their trust in Jesus with their grandchildren.



4. This Time Tomorrow

This Time Tomorrow has proved to be the single most impactful action to take at the beginning of this journey. TTT (as most come to call it) is an interview with someone in a congregation in a Sunday or midweek service for two or three minutes about where they will be this time tomorrow. It's a chance to ask them about where they will be, what are the challenges, the opportunities, what people can pray? It doesn't have to be people in big jobs and to begin with probably shouldn't. And again, it shouldn't just be adults.



There are all kinds of variations on this: Selfie of the Week – people taking selfies of themselves in their context, or being filmed on a phone etc. Or the Big Selfie Project where lots of people are asked to bring selfies from the past week into church. Again, this values the everyday context, and generates different kinds of conversations after the service and in groups. Some people have also found it helpful to find a person in the congregation to lead this – to find the people and conduct the interviews.

5. What's Noted on the Notice Boards

Notice boards tell the congregation what's seen to be important.

What's there?

Information about church-based activities?

Always. Information about overseas mission?

Sometimes.

Why not include a map of where the congregation spend time during the week? Or

pictures and prayer points about their activities there? Or a prayer for the week – included in the notice sheet – that focuses on a particular group of people.



6. Commissioning People

Many churches commission people for ministries in the church but it's enormously powerful to also commission people for 'ministries' beyond the church: for people changing jobs, or taking up new responsibilities in the community, or starting the school or university year, or moving into retirement.

Some do it on an ad hoc basis; some bigger churches have done this quarterly, praying for larger groups of people at the same time. It is a reminder to everyone that where God has placed us is important.

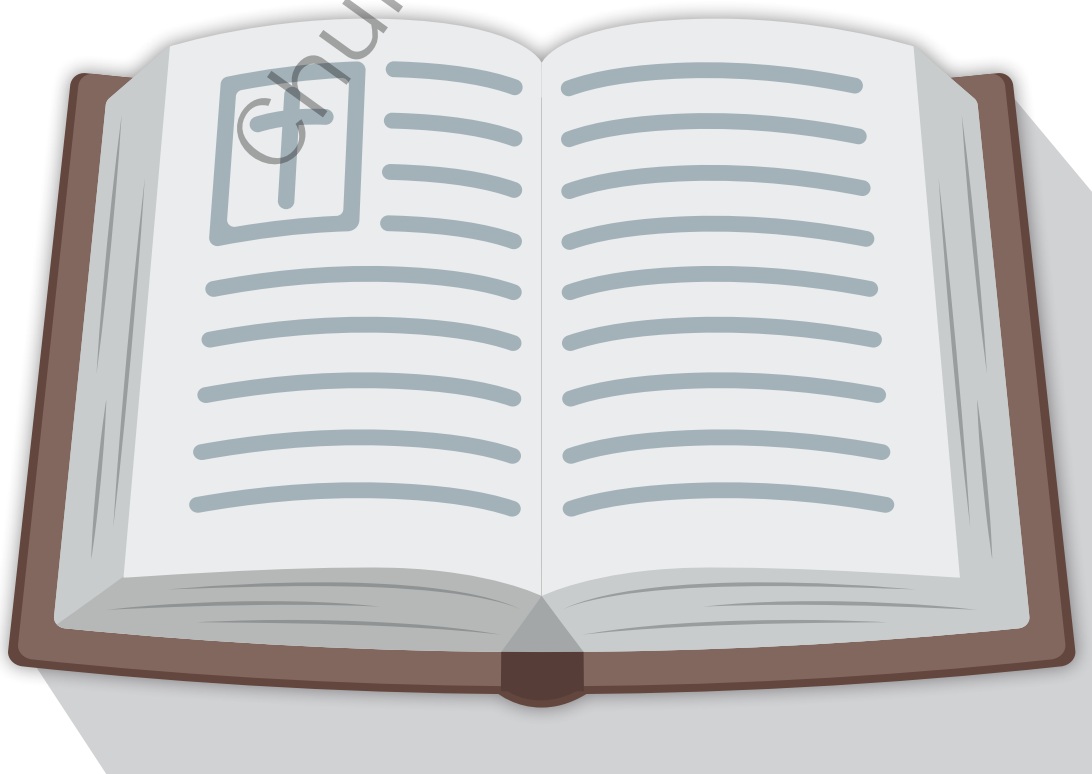
Some dioceses have adopted this as a larger programme – commissioning people as 'Ambassadors' with resources and training to support this notion.



7. Preaching Matters

Preaching is one of the most significant ways that churches have been able to sustain their attention to what's going on throughout the week.

This is not because they have focused on certain topics, rather that preachers – ordained, Readers, lay – have maintained a certain posture: they preach from a Bible that is concerned about all of life, about a God who is concerned about all of life, to a people who are called to 'go in peace to love and serve the Lord' in all of life. Most people are involved in preaching as listeners – so our feedback can also be helpful. When someone makes a relevant link to everyday faith that has made a difference, encourage them with this insight!

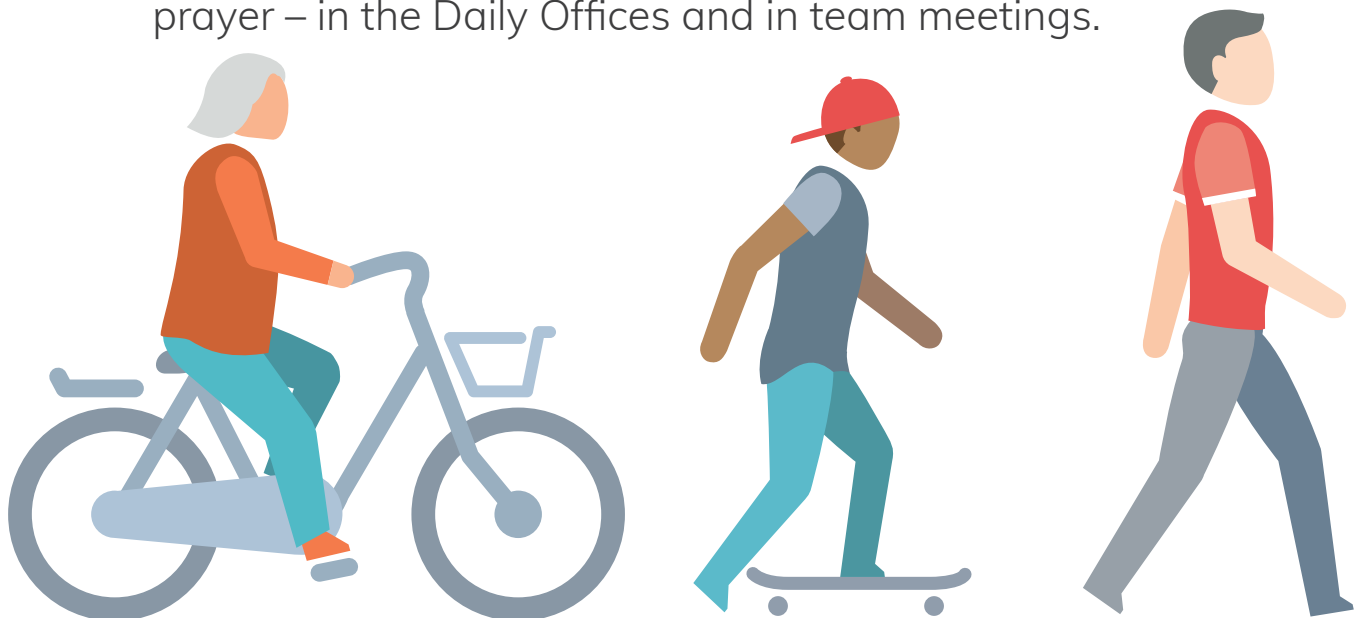


Embedding the changes

None of the ideas above are instant fixes; none will change the culture overnight. It takes time and prayerful persistence to create a culture that helps people live out their daily lives more consciously with Christ. With that in mind, there are a few further simple steps to make sure they don't let it slide off their agenda.

This includes:

- Regular reviews of the use of these shifts to a Sunday to Saturday focus at the PCC.
- Popping reminders in their diary so the ideas don't slip out of their own priorities and thinking.
- Giving someone in the church the role of championing these changes, with permission to ask how these are going in PCC, team meetings and in general conversation.
- Making sure people's callings in everyday life are included in prayer – in the Daily Offices and in team meetings.



Further Resources for Sunday to Saturday faith-fullness

Check out the Living out our faith and the Faith in action sections on the CofE's website - churchofengland.org. This site will be regularly refreshed with a range of links and resources. You will also find stories of how the shift to Sunday to Saturday thinking has been effective for Christians in diverse churches. For more information about the work of the London Institute for Contemporary Christian (LICC) and their much-used Fruitfulness on the Frontline, Whole Life Worship and Whole Preaching resources visit licc.org.uk.

Setting God's People Free for... a series of practical ideas for churches and individuals to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus in all of life, Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday.

Join the conversation by sharing your ideas and experiences on being Christians Sunday to Saturday, use **#SGPF** on any of our social media channels:



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The Church of England's Renewal & Reform programme, aimed at helping us become a growing Church for all people and for all places.