

## **Thinking about blessing same-sex relationships:**

### **Resources list**

The Church of England has decided to offer prayers of blessing for committed, loving, monogamous same-sex relationships. The actual prayers, and the guidance that goes with them, will be discussed at a General Synod meeting in July 2023.

If you've already fairly sure what you believe about this issue - either agreeing or disagreeing with it - then we urge you to make sure you engage with someone who thinks differently to you, so that you can understand not just *what* they believe, but *why* they believe it as well.

If you're not sure what you believe about this issue - then we'd urge you to engage with both sides of the discussion prayerfully, as you seek to come to your own conclusion.

There's masses on here - some longer, some shorter. Pick whatever level you want to engage in this debate at. But do make sure you pray through some of the relevant Bible passages too!

No labels are ideal. We're using the words 'traditionalist' and 'revisionist' below. We're not intending either of those to be pejorative terms - so please don't take offence at them!

### **Some of the relevant Bible passages**

#### **Teaching on Marriage**

Genesis 2:21-24

#### **Jesus' teachings on marriage etc**

Matthew 5:27-31

Mark 10:5-9

Mathew 15:16-20

Matthew 19:8-12

#### **Teaching on Sexual Immorality**

John 8.1-11

Acts 15:24-29

1 Corinthians 6:7-7:8

Hebrews 13:1-4

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Ephesians 5:1-13

Galatians 5:13-21

Colossians 3:1-11

Romans 13:11-14

Jude 1:5-7

2 Corinthians 12:19-21

Revelation 21:6-8

#### **Teaching on homosexuality**

Leviticus 18:22

Leviticus 20:13

Romans 1:21-32

1 Timothy 1:8-11

1 Corinthians 6:7-11

### **Teaching on love, mercy and inclusion**

Isaiah 56:3-8  
Matthew 7: 17-20  
Luke 6:36  
Galatians 3:22-28  
Acts 10-11  
Romans 13.8-10

### **Teaching on handling conflict**

Acts 15  
Romans 14-15  
Galatians 5.15

### **Teaching on unity**

Ephesians 2.11-22  
John 17

### **Teaching on the Bible's authority and Spirit's inspiration**

John 16:12-14  
2 Timothy 3.16-17  
2 Peter 1.19-21

## **Debates: both revisionist and traditional points of view**

### **Articles**

David Instrone-Brewer and Ian Paul: did Paul prohibit all forms of same-sex sexual relations?  
<https://www.premierchristianity.com/theology/did-paul-condemn-all-homosexuality/14742.article> and <https://www.premierchristianity.com/theology/paul-does-condemn-all-same-sex-activity/14743.article>

### **Booklets**

Bishop Stephen Croft: Together in love and faith: personal reflections and next steps for the church <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/news/same-sex-marriage-in-cofe.php> (download link halfway down)

Vaughan Roberts: Together in love and faith?: a response to the Bishop of Oxford  
<https://ceec.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Vaughan-Roberts-Together-in-Love-and-Faith-a-response.pdf>

### **Books**

Brad & Drew Harper, Space at the Table: Conversations Between an Evangelical Theologian and his Gay Son <https://amzn.eu/d/2cd3TKd>

Church of England: Living in Love and Faith - study book  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith/living-love-and-faith-book>

## Podcasts

<https://unbelievable.podbean.com/e/does-scripture-forbid-same-sex-relationships-robert-gagnon-vs-jayne-ozanne/> *This is quite a fiery debate from 2015 where both contributors can be a little unkind towards one another. It's helpful in that the main focus is on what the bible says and draws on liberal and orthodox scholarship. Robert Gagnon is a well known scholar and Jayne Ozanne was the director of Accepting Evangelicals*

<https://unbelievable.podbean.com/e/sexuality-gender-identity-2-views-on-lgbt-and-the-church-andrew-bunt-charlie-bell/> *This was recorded in February 2023. This conversation is far more gracious. The contributors hold opposing views yet do so clearly and with grace. If you have listened to the other podcast you will notice how the conversation has dramatically shifted since 2015, rather than being grounded in the different understanding of words (2015) here it is far more rooted in "good fruit."*

Tim Mackie (from the Bible project): LGBTQ and the Bible (65 mins)

<https://almostheretical.com/episodes/tim-mackie-conversation>

## **A revisionist point of view: we should seek to bless loving, monogamous, committed same-sex relationships**

### Books

Jeffery John: Permanent, Faithful, Stable <https://amzn.eu/d/4qkSiJN>

Matthew Vines: God and the Gay Christian: the Biblical case in support of same-sex relationships <https://amzn.eu/d/8ROEhep>

Ken Wilson: A letter to my congregation <https://amzn.eu/d/9Ikhtp7>

James Brownson: Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships <https://amzn.eu/d/iiqcnY7>

Jonathan Tallon: Affirmative: Why You Can Say Yes to the Bible and Yes to People Who Are LGBTQI+ <https://amzn.eu/d/6Uj2Klc>

### Testimonies

Vicky Beeching: Undivided: Coming Out, Becoming Whole, and Living Free From Shame <https://amzn.eu/d/6awoHyL> *Worship leader who after years of struggle comes out and argues Christians should accept gay marriage.*

Marcus Green: Possibility of Difference. <https://amzn.eu/d/4H6V3MI> *Anglican priest who after many years came out and supports same-sex marriage. He has a blog with same title.*

Jayne Ozanne, Just Love: A journey of self-acceptance <https://amzn.eu/d/4P5KsMK> *Anglican who is now a leading advocate for same-sex marriage*

## Articles

David Instone-Brewer: Did Paul condemn all homosexuality?  
<https://www.premierchristianity.com/theology/did-paul-condemn-all-homosexuality/14742.article>

## Videos

Two talks from a former Vineyard Church pastor (about 45 mins each):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4i9dGEiVm-o> and  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTk-199Iylg>  
Matthew Vines on studying the Bible and LGBTQ inclusion (65 mins)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct\\_9XyzPQbU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct_9XyzPQbU)

## Websites

<https://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk/> *A charity that enables LGBT+ Christians and advocates for change within the church, ecumenically and intentionally in partnership with likeminded organisations.*

## A traditional point of view: we should only bless heterosexual marriages

### Books

Sam Allberry: Is God anti-gay (128 pages) <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/is-god-anti-gay>  
*Written by a celibate same-sex attracted Christian - concise coverage of bible texts, common objections and pastoral questions*

Sam Allberry: Why does God care who I sleep with? (128 pages) <https://amzn.eu/d/aCl6xzk>  
*Written by a celibate same-sex attracted Christian - looking more broadly at questions of sex and sexuality*

Ed Shaw: The Plausibility Problem: the church and same-sex attraction (160 pages)  
<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-plausibility-problem> *Written by a celibate same-sex attracted Christian - a really helpful challenge to the church to support all single people*

William Loader: Sexuality in the New Testament: Understanding the Key Texts (176 pages)  
<https://amzn.eu/d/akbBTVY> *“Loader is the most prominent expert on ancient and biblical views of sexuality, having written five large and two small volumes in his lifetime. It is worth noting that Loader himself does not personally see anything wrong with homosexual relationships; he just ... proves that you can’t get the Bible itself to give them any support.” (Tim Keller)*

### Testimonies

Jackie Hill Perry: Gay girl, good God: The Story of Who I Was, and Who God Has Always Been  
<https://amzn.eu/d/2hxsrmk>

Wesley Hill: Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality  
<https://amzn.eu/d/2fnhIJP>. See also his *Spiritual Friendship: Finding Love in the Church as a Celibate Gay Christian*.

David Bennett: War of loves: The Unexpected Story of a Gay Activist Discovering Jesus  
<https://amzn.eu/d/hTsknZG>

## Articles

Did Paul prohibit all forms of same-sex sexual relations? <https://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/did-paul-prohibit-all-forms-of-same-sex-sexual-relations/>

FAQs on the Bible, sex and marriage (from Church of England Evangelical Council)  
<https://declaration.ceec.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CEEC-FAQs-on-the-bible-sex-and-marriage.pdf>

John Pike: What types of same gender relationships were the ancients and biblical writers aware of? <https://www.psephizo.com/sexuality-2/were-loving-faithful-same-sex-relations-known-in-antiquity/>

## Videos

Are services of blessing for same-sex couples a possible compromise?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0ItBg9kms> (5m30s)

Jon Tyson: The controversial Jesus - Jesus and the gay community  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqF0MwqjuBU> (90 mins)

Sam Allberry: Is God anti-gay? (includes Q&A, 38 mins) and  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgGgogHthdM> Why does God care who I sleep with? (34 mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNHkOo78gJE>

## Websites

Living Out - <https://www.livingout.org> - helping people, churches and society talk about faith and sexuality.

True Freedom Trust - <https://www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk> – a teaching and pastoral support ministry that holds to the orthodox biblical view of sex, gender and relationships.

<https://ceec.info/resources/gods-beautiful-story> - Church of England Evangelical Council – a series of films looking at different aspects of this discussion

*Compiled for St James' by the Park, May 2023.*

*NB Although this list is exhausting, it's by no means exhaustive! If there is other material that you have found helpful that might be worth sharing more widely, do let us know.*