

Broken partnership with House of Bishops FAQs

1. What is the House of Bishops?

The House of Bishops is one of three Houses that make up the General Synod of the Church of England. The House of Bishops is made up of all diocesan bishops including the offshore dioceses of Sodor and Man and Gibraltar in Europe, the Bishop of Dover, the Bishop to the Armed Forces, and nine elected suffragan bishops.

2. What is the House of Bishops' role in relation to doctrine?

Under Article 7 of the Constitution of General Synod, the House of Bishops has a special role with matters relating to doctrine and liturgy. In matters of doctrine and liturgy, the House of Bishops is the visible leadership of the Church of England. In a Bishop's consecration vows in the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer, the Bishop promises that they will 'banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word'.

The Church of England's doctrinal position is spelled out in Canon A5, "*the doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal.*"

3. What does it mean for St Helen's to be in 'broken partnership' with the House of Bishops?

Partnership, as understood in the Bible, involves working with others in prayerful proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus using the resources God has given to us. To be 'in broken partnership' with the House of Bishops is to be unable to recognise the spiritual leadership and authority of the House of Bishops.

4. Are we leaving the Church of England?

No. We may be in broken partnership with the House of Bishops but we remain a Church of England church in partnership with many Church of England churches through ReNew, as well as with the majority of worldwide Anglicans in Gafcon who subscribe to the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration.

The Church of England is a body of local churches. It is a legal and temporal entity and it is also a spiritual body (with stated orthodox doctrinal positions spelled out in its legal canons and the 39 Articles and Book of Common Prayer). The Church of England is connected with other Anglican churches across the world. Many of these churches share the same orthodox doctrinal foundations. As a matter of principle, we stand on the doctrinal ground and we hold the spiritual convictions that have been held by the Church of England through the centuries.

Furthermore, for centuries faithful Biblically minded Christians have provided historic resources such as all the buildings which we currently use. These were provided and maintained for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel as understood in the Church of England's foundational formularies. We will continue using those buildings to proclaim the gospel.