

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND and CYTŪN

Training course for Ecumenical Officers

Preparatory prayer – over three days

Please set aside some time for prayer each day, say at least ten minutes, to prepare for the course.

We've put the material for each day in a separate box in case it helps you to cut out the text for each day to minimise distractions.

Day one: the personal context

Isaiah 44:2

Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

God has called you, by whatever means, to work for Christian unity. This is how God's love shapes part of your spiritual journey in the day ahead.

How do you feel about that? Grateful, tired, uncomfortable, energized? Whatever it is, acknowledge it. Bring your feelings to the Lord and speak to God as one friend to another.

Day two: the church context

Philippians 2:1-2

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

God calls the church to experience the joy of unity. It is a challenge. Somehow we must bring together the deep accord that God wants with the rich diversity God also rejoices in. It demands love to appreciate the other and yet also to offer as a gift what we have understood.

How can take up that challenge in your own life? How do you hope to help the Christians you serve in your ecumenical role to do that? Speak about your hopes and fears with God.

Day three: the world context

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

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.

In its unity the church experiences the reconciliation that Jesus achieved by his death and resurrection. Through us God calls the world to experience that reconciliation. New creation is offered to each person. It is a huge vision. Yet, in our divisions, we fall short.

How do you feel about the contrast between the gift of God in Christ and our imperfect response? Sad, angry, inspired to act, a sense of God's sovereign purpose?

Share with God, as you would with someone intimate with you, how this makes you feel. Ask God to show you how you can act.