

Since the beginning of the Living in Love and Faith process, people across the Church of England have been studying, praying and sharing together about sexuality, identity, relationships and marriage. That process has revealed profound differences in theological conviction and biblical interpretation. But that does not change the fact that every group and every Christian has a place in the Church of England.

In his interview on the Leading podcast, the Archbishop of Canterbury was asked whether gay sex is sinful. Alastair Campbell was returning to this question having first put it to the Archbishop in 2017 during an interview for GQ magazine. In both interviews, Archbishop Justin spoke honestly about the fact that these are complex questions that have caused deep division in the church. In both interviews, he said that what seem most central to him are stable, committed and faithful relationships.

Archbishop Justin was giving a personal view that reflects the position now held by himself, the Archbishop of York and many other bishops regarding sexual intimacy. He has been honest that his thinking has evolved over the years through much prayer and theological reflection – particularly through the Living in Love and Faith process – and he now holds this view sincerely. It reflects his commitment to continuing to welcome, love and include LGBTQ+ people more fully in the life of the Church.

However, there is no consensus among the bishops on this question, and the Church remains deeply divided. Archbishop Justin stressed his absolute commitment to those who hold a traditional view having “a full and undoubted place in the Church of England”. His answer does not indicate a changing of teaching from the House of Bishops. This is an ongoing conversation across the Church – and Archbishop Justin hopes that the bishops, together with clergy and laity, will keep praying and reflecting on these questions.

2 min read

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