

Setting God's People Free for... **Monday to Saturday**





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Getting Started: Small shifts to a big difference

Being a church leader is a demanding task. Whether you are a lay or ordained minister, responsible for a whole community or leading a small group, this responsibility means paying attention to a variety of people, from diverse backgrounds and how the ministry we engage in supports and sustains their faith – everyday. How, in amongst this busyness, can church leaders begin a journey of envisioning and empowering members of our congregations – adults and children – to see the opportunities they have to live out the way of Christ and share his grace and truth in their Monday to Saturday lives? This might seem a daunting task, or another thing to add to the list. This however, is not the case. Small shifts in what you are doing already can make a big difference in the enabling such faith.



In this *Setting God's People Free For...* we look at tried and tested ways to achieve this shift. It's often not about adding new things but more about doing the things we already do in a slightly different way. It can be as simple as changing the background on a slide for a hymn from a coastal sunset to a picture of your town. Over the last ten years, LICC has been learning from leaders in scores of churches in Dioceses from Carlisle to Truro. Here are seven of the ideas that 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?



Similarly, think about encouraging your leaders, wardens, readers, 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. 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. How can we support our young people in their challenges and opportunities?

Equally, when new people come into church rather than asking, once they've settled in, how they can help in the life of the church why not find out first how we can get behind them?

Changing the conversations is one of the quickest ways to change the direction of a culture.



2. Visit People in Context

Visiting a church member in their workplace is one of the most helpful ways of affirming wider Christian vocations. Moreover, many clergy have found this the single most helpful action they can take to resource their own ministry - it helps clergy see where their congregation are, what it's actually like, the kind of people they're with.

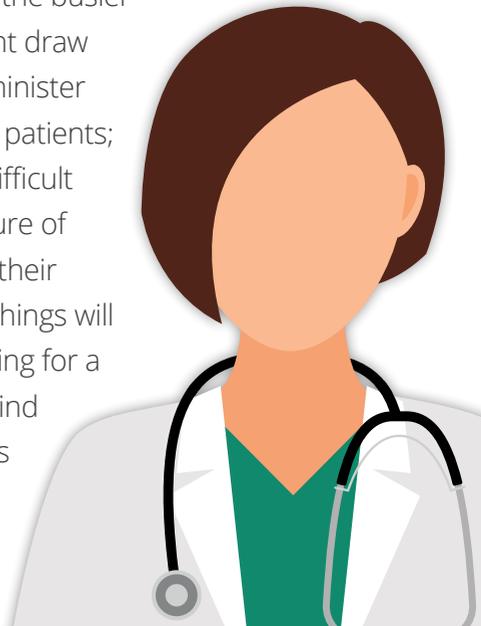
Not only does this honour those people and value their context, it can also spark completely different kinds of conversations, build a closer relationship with the person visited and almost always adds to the store of illustrations and applications for sermons. It does require clergy in particular to adjust their time, but you can begin small – once every six weeks or so, but you may well find it's so rewarding that you increase the frequency. Of course, anyone with some time can do this – curates, wardens, readers, deacons, home-group leaders, any member of the congregation really ...



3. Sunday Praying for Monday to Saturday Living

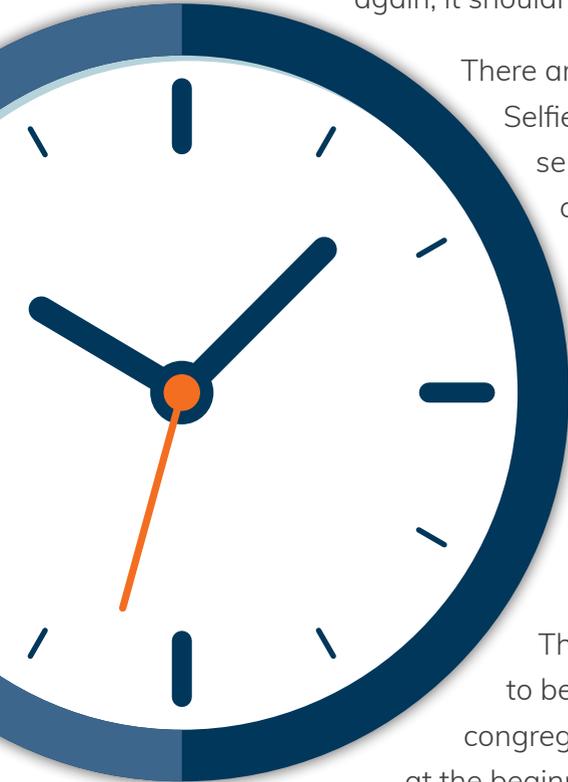
When praying changes, so do hearts. Of course, you can integrate a whole-life perspective into any every element of a Sunday service but the intercessions is the most obvious moment: praying for people in particular sectors week by week, or for occupations or school activities that people in your church 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

Interview someone in your congregation in a Sunday or midweek service for two or three minutes about where they will be this time tomorrow. 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.

This Time Tomorrow has proved to be the single most impactful congregational action a leader can take at the beginning of this journey.

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

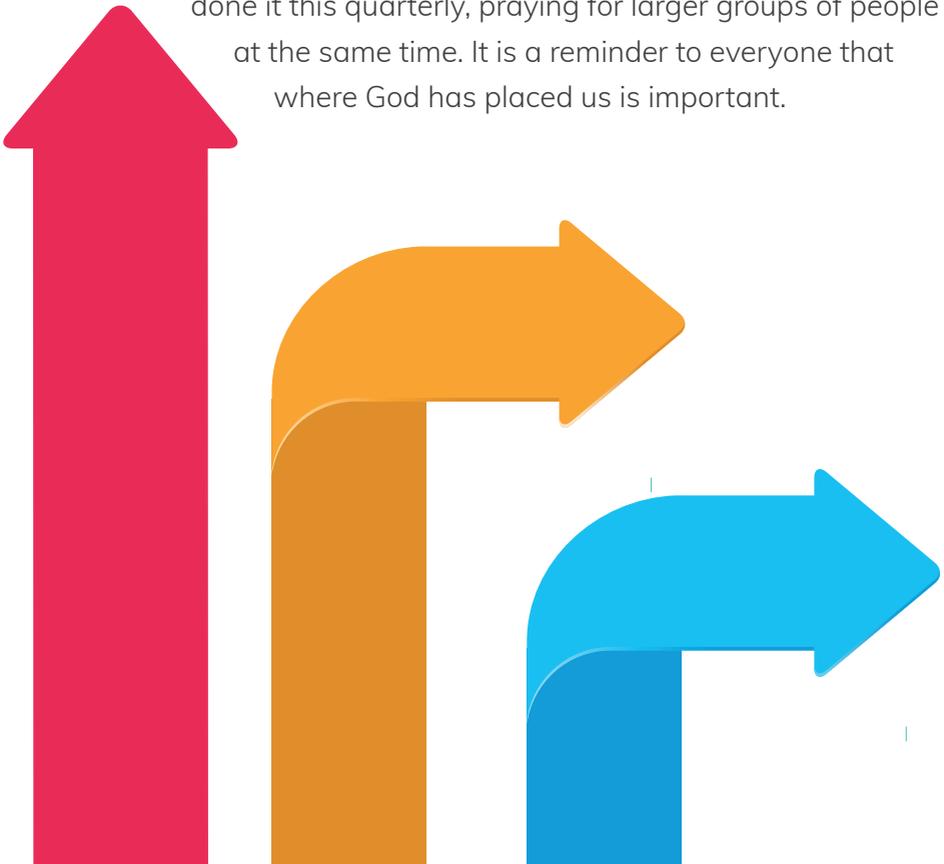
pictures and prayer points about their activities there? Or a prayer for the week – included in the notice sheet – that focuses on a particular group of people.



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.

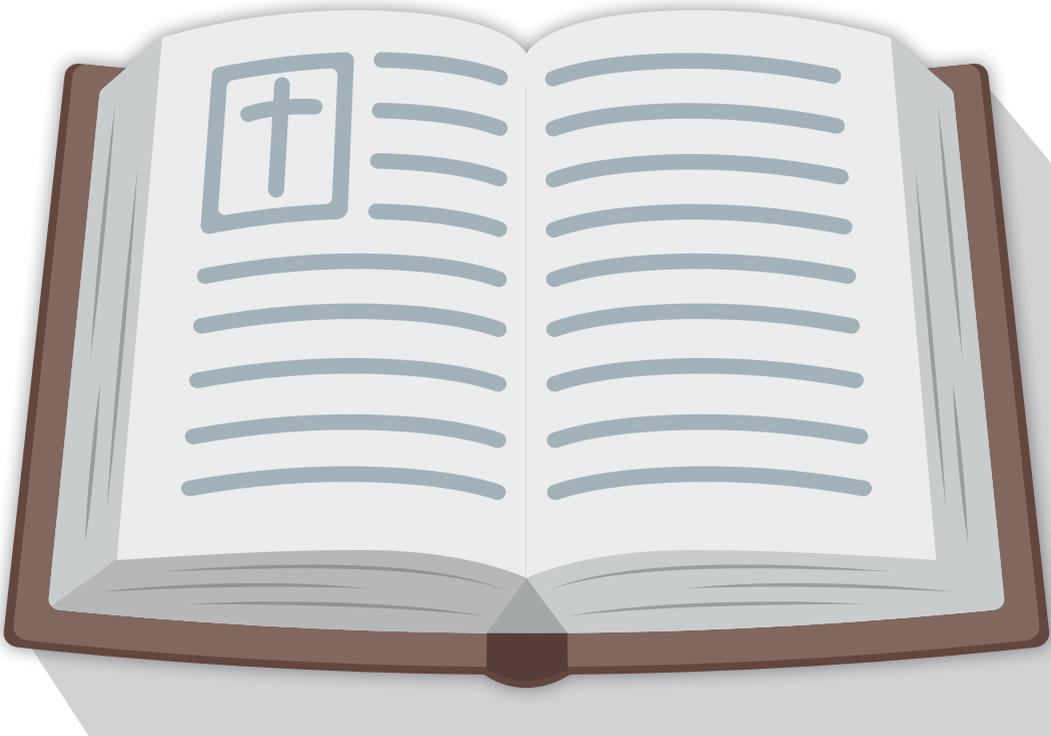
Some do it on an ad hoc basis; some bigger churches have done it this quarterly, praying for larger groups of people at the same time. It is a reminder to everyone that where God has placed us is important.



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.

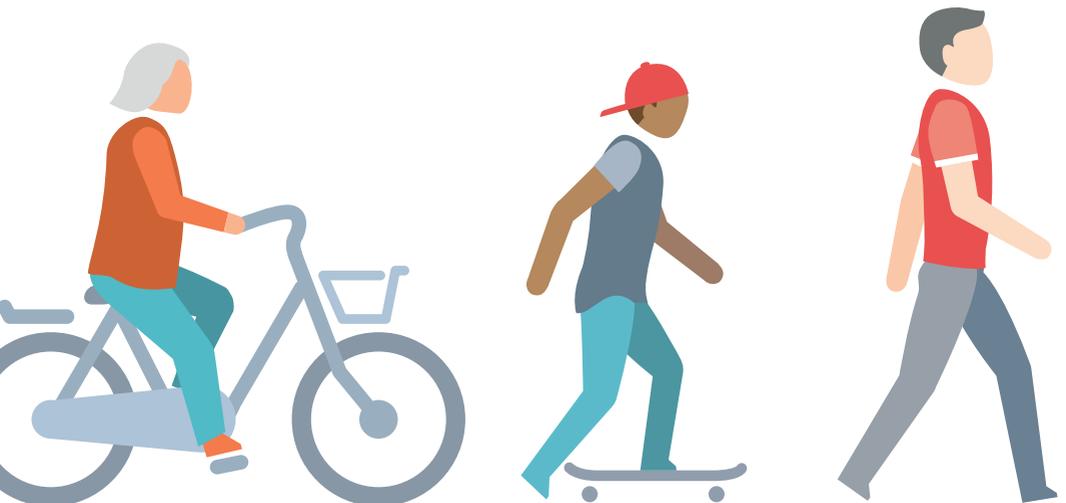


Embedding the changes

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, leaders have looked for ways to make sure they don't let it slide off their agenda.

This includes:

- Regular reviews of a Mon-Sat 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 – a warden or friend – permission to ask how they're getting on with these changes.
- Making sure people's Monday to Saturday ministry is included in prayer – in the Daily Offices and in team meetings.



Further Resources for Monday to Saturday faith-fullness

Check out the Living out our faith and the Faith in action sections on the CofE's website - [churchofengland.org](https://www.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 Monday to Saturday thinking have 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](https://www.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 Mon-Sat 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.