



We are being asked to listen.

We are being asked to listen and to reflect deeply and prayerfully on what we have heard.

This listening isn't a one-off activity, it is a new approach, a new way of journeying together as the People of God.

To begin this new approach Pope Francis is gathering the entire church, wanting every single person to be listened to.

This kind of gathering of the church is called a 'synod' and unlike any other synod in the history of the church, this synod will not have an end date! The Holy Father is calling us to be a 'synodal church' a church of discernment, of prayer and dialogue.

If this process is to be authentic we must take great care to make sure that all we do, say and hear is rooted in prayer, the Sacred Scriptures and Tradition and the Liturgy of the Church - the ways the Holy Spirit inspires and influences us daily.

In many ways, this movement towards a synodal church has already begun here in the Diocese of Portsmouth, in many parish communities, in our Framework for Collaboration, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and of course our recent survey 'a thousand voices'.

To help focus our thoughts for this new synodal process, and to bring together all that we have already been doing, we have a question to unpack:

**'What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish and in the Diocese – to make the church's mission today more vibrant and effective?'**

The first fruit of our discussions will be fed into our official response to the Holy Father's invitation to speak and to be listened to in these earliest stages of our becoming a synodal church.

"What changes need to be made – in myself, in our parish & in the Diocese – to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?"



"The basis of the lived synodality which the Holy Father envisages, is that of the Church as the pilgrim People of God journeying together"....

1. Introduce or appoint someone to take notes (2 minutes)
2. Ask for a volunteer as a timekeeper (2 minutes)
3. Begin the time of Discernment with the opening prayer followed by the Scripture reading. (5-10 minutes)
4. Introduce the question and the 10 themes (5 minutes)
5. 30 mins of private reflection and prayer begins. (Individuals to make their own notes)
6. First round of sharing (20 minutes)
7. Break (15 minutes)
8. Second round of sharing (20 minutes)
9. Summary and consensus

### Opening Prayer:

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.  
With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go and  
how we are to pursue it.  
We are weak and sinful; do not let us  
promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down  
the wrong path nor partiality influence  
our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity so that we  
may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.  
All this we ask of You, who are at work  
in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and  
the Son, forever and ever.  
Amen.

### Scripture Reading:

#### Acts 2: 1-4

"When Pentecost day came round, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves."

# The question:

"What changes need to be made — *in myself, in our parish & in the Diocese* — to make the Church's mission today more vibrant and effective?"

## **1. THE JOURNEYING COMPANIONS**

*How can we be more welcoming as a Christian community?*

## **2. LISTENING**

*To whom do we listen?*

## **3. SPEAKING OUT**

*How can we be more honest in our dealings with each other?*

## **4. CELEBRATING**

*How might we celebrate better the Liturgy in our parish?*

## **5. CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE MISSION**

*How well do we work together as clergy and laity for the mission of the Church?*

## **6. DIALOGUE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

*How can our group, parish, diocese and the Church be more outward-facing?*

## **7. WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS**

*In what ways might we improve our dialogue and relationship with other Christians?*

## **8. AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION**

*How can we make the Church more participatory and increase co-responsibility?*

## **9. DISCERNING AND DECIDING**

*In a synodal style Church, what new processes of decision-making and decision-taking are needed? How transparent and accountable are the decisions made?*

## **10. FORMING OURSELVES IN SYNODALITY**

*How do we form people to make them more capable of "journeying together"?*

notes: