

# Church of England to consider cutting requirement for regular services

Posted: Tue, 18th Oct 2016

The Church of England is considering steps to abandon its current national obligations by lifting the requirement to hold regular services.

A paper published by the Church is [proposing](#) "to relax the requirements for regular worship in parish churches in sparsely-populated benefices".

If the reform goes ahead the requirement under canon law for each parish to conduct communion, morning and evening prayers every Sunday and on other special days would be lifted.

The Archbishops' Council has already approved the proposal, one of a raft of reforms set out by the Church's 'Simplification Task Group'.

The task group aims to make the Church "more fit for purpose for worship, ministry and mission" and [Christian Today](#) has described the group's purpose as "stopping the 'terrifying' decline" of the Church.

Keith Porteous Wood, the NSS's executive director, commented "The Church's own justification for the huge privilege of Establishment rests in part on its presence in parishes throughout England. If these obligations are removed, it further weakens the case for the continuance of Establishment, as does the reason behind the proposed change – the paucity of congregants. It is not unknown for there to be no one at all attending a service."

The move comes amid sustained decline in church attendance – something the Church of England is trying to compensate for through its faith schools.

The number of people attending Church of England services every week [recently fell](#) below 1 million for the first time. Less than 2% of the population regularly attend Anglican services and the Church expects this figure to decline in the next 30 years.

The chair of the task group, Bishop Pete Broadbent, [said](#): "In rural parishes, no vicar can actually get around all their parishes so technically, they're breaking the law. All we're doing is putting the law in line with what already happens."

The Church of England advertises itself as "A Christian presence in every community" which plays "a vital role in the life of the nation, proclaiming the Christian gospel in words and actions and providing services of Christian worship and praise" with its "network of parishes cover the country".

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