

Pilgrim Partners

The Church of England Baptism service starts like this:

“Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives...”

Here in Shirley Parish we think that being on a journey is much easier (and more fun) when you are sharing it with someone else. After all, Jesus sent his followers out in pairs to practise what they had seen him doing.



So we're inviting and encouraging as many people as possible to have what we're calling a Pilgrim Partner – another 'ordinary Christian' to talk to about God, Jesus and our Christian journey and how it's going. Someone who will listen, support, encourage, and maybe even gently challenge us about our faith and how we might live it out. And for whom we can do the same.

Sounds scary.....

Actually, it's really not. There are some suggested questions to get the conversation going, which you can use if you want to. Most people find that it feels a bit awkward for about 5 minutes, then the conversation just flows.

So - what exactly do we do when we meet?

At your first meeting it's good to agree that what is talked about is confidential to the two of you¹. Pick two or maybe three of the questions to talk about. Make sure you both have the opportunity to speak and both get chance to listen. The idea is to be positive and to encourage and support each other.

But I don't know enough. What if I get it wrong and look stupid?

It's not about discussing deep theology, or knowing exactly where to find King Hezekiah in the Bible. It's about what it means to us to be a follower of Jesus in our own lives, today, here in Shirley. You can't be 'wrong' about your own experiences.

And if a question comes up talk to one of the clergy, or Readers, or someone else you trust. Or maybe send it in anonymously to the next Open 2 Questions session.

My faith is a private matter. I don't feel comfortable talking about it.

It can be hard to talk about faith with people who don't share it. It's very different when we're chatting with someone else who shares our belief. It can be really liberating to share the good bits and the tough bits, and find that we're not alone!

Someone once said that the upright of the Cross is about each of us relating to God, and the crossbar is about us engaging with others. They're both part of what it means to be a Christian.

I don't have time...

We're suggesting that you meet with your Pilgrim Partner for about an hour every two months or so, but it's up to you. We'd suggest that it's usually best not to leave more than three months between get-togethers or it all becomes a bit 'bitty.'

OK – sounds scary, but I'll give it a go. What do I do now?

Hooray!

You can either

Agree with someone to be Pilgrim Partners, arrange to meet up, and get started. You might want to use the questions in this leaflet.

or

Let Kate Day know that you would like a Pilgrim Partner and she will suggest someone you might link up with.

or

If you'd like to have a trial run with someone who's done it before, then let Kate know and she will sort that out for you.

What if I've still got questions?

Please speak to one of the Clergy or Readers (Gill, Denise, Sarah, Kate D) or to Margaret Foresheew or Chris Terry. They have all had Pilgrim Partners for a while now, and will do their best to help.

Seven Questions for Pilgrim Partners

These questions are offered as a starting point for a conversation. They're not compulsory, but they have been chosen as they help us to focus on our relationship with God, rather than on "church matters."

Since we last met...

- Is there something joyful or difficult that I want to share?
- How have I connected with God?
- How have I dealt with the things which have been stopping me from getting to know God better?
- When have I been aware of God in my everyday life?
- When have I allowed myself to be still and know that God loves me?
- How have I offered God's love to others, or talked about God with those who are interested?
- How has the worship, work and witness of our church community helped me grow as a Christian?

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¹ The exception to this is if a safeguarding issue were to come up. Both of you need to be aware that this could not be kept confidential and would have to be raised with the Safeguarding Officer.