



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.

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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"?