

Loving and all-powerful God,
we thank you for the grace of this time –
for our companionship and your presence among us.
We thank you particularly for....

We acknowledge that we have at times disagreed
or caused hurt which has led us away from seeking your will
for us and for the community we serve.
For this, we ask your pardon and that of each other...
We know that you are our God
and we are your people.

We thank you for entrusting us with the care of N....
(name of parish or community)
and pray that we will be worthy of this trust,
sharing the gifts that you have given to us
with others
and helping them to grow
in knowledge and love of you.
We ask this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.



As part of our prayer and deliberations,
it is good to remember that
we can call upon the prayers of many others.

You might like to create Litany of your local Saints;
include the Diocesan patrons in the Litany:

Our Lady Immaculate

St Cuthbert

Pray for us



**Glory be to the Father—
in whom we live and move
and have our being.**

**Glory be to the Son –
whose name we bear and who
calls each of us to be his disciples;
to build his Kingdom and to go out
into the world and bear its fruit.**

**Glory be to the Holy Spirit –
pouring out grace and guidance,
forming us and renewing us.**

**Inspire us all
in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
to live the Gospel,
to be open to change
and to move forward together in hope.
Amen**



Praying at Meetings

Ideas for Praying during Forward Together in Hope



We believe that the Holy Spirit is present throughout our meetings. Jesus himself said that where two or three of us are gathered together he is present in our midst. This means that he is there at the beginning and the end—but also in the middle:

- when we cannot see what someone is getting at
- when our attention begins to drift
- when we are angry
- when things suddenly fall into place
- when a consensus is reached.

In ***Forward Together in Hope***, Bishop Séamus has encouraged us to place a high priority on prayer and the meetings we hold to review life in our communities are important places for this to happen. If we do not centre them on prayer, there is a real danger that they will become exercises in looking at our finances and properties in isolation from who we are and what these things enable us to do.

This leaflet looks at how we might do this.



***When we complain about
having too many meetings,
it is worth remembering
that the Holy Spirit
turned up at one...
And Pentecost happened!***

What might our meetings look like?

Gathering

As we begin, we remember that we are in the presence of God, gathered under the Sign of the Cross and call upon the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us.

Listening to the Word of God

Scripture is one way in which Christ is present among us. We listen in our meeting for a word or a phrase that seems to strike us as important, something that resonates deep within us. We then spend a few minutes pondering why this might be significant—for us and for the meeting. This will sometimes happen in a time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

Sharing our Reflections

We share with one or two people some of the things that have come to our minds and hearts. At this stage we are still listening—but this time to each other—not discussing!

Entering the next stage of the Meeting

We discuss and reflect on the life of our community ... but always with reference to what has come up in the prayer.

You might have these thoughts at the back of your mind:

- How is what we are saying reflecting what was given in the prayer?

- Do we seem to be going in the same direction as the prayer or are we heading somewhere else?
- Is something jarring?
- Where are things feeling 'right'?
- Is there something deep within me that needs to be said? And how am I going to say it in a way that takes things forward?
- Are we building the Kingdom of God – or are we focusing on ourselves and what makes us comfortable?



Gathering up our Meeting

We reflect back over the things that have been said or done or decided that speak of being in harmony with God's will – and, perhaps, things that seem to be about disharmony.

The meeting closes with prayer—possibly using those overleaf.

