

Handout: ETHICS

ARE SAME-SEX BLESSINGS THE RIGHT OR WRONG THING TO DO? DOES GOD BLESS SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS?

Does God bless lifelong, committed sexual relationships – characterized by fidelity, monogamy, and love – between two committed Christians of the same sex? What is the appropriate ethical response for us as Christians and as the Church?

A recent General Convention of TEC has proposed a blessing of two people of the same sex who:
–are committed to companionship, fidelity, and lifelong commitment
–hope to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit...” (p. 24)

Ethical considerations include:

- the Church’s historic practice of marriage, as shaped by Scripture: unitive and procreative
- the love of our marriages ideally reflect the love and faithfulness of Jesus; marriage is a sacramental reality imaging Christ and the Church as his bride
- traditionally, marriage brings together the male-female differentiation
- traditionally, and historically, a primary purpose of marriage was procreation
- marriage may be seen as “suffering procreative love”
- marriage may also be seen as a “school for virtue...[and for] sanctification”, regardless of the gender

Questions:

1. How might same-sex marriage change the meaning of traditional marriage? What is the risk?
2. How might it be argued that same-sex blessings won’t change the basic meaning of marriage? Are there ways in which one might argue that marriage and community would actually be strengthened?
3. Are there elements of “lifelong, committed sexual relationships characterized by fidelity [and] monogamy... between two committed Christians of the same sex” that are aspects of God’s creative purposes? If so, what should be the response of the Church to preserve and encourage the growth of these elements?
4. Within your congregation, what is at stake in your response to question 3?
5. What further questions have been raised for you by this discussion?