

## **My attitude to homosexuals**

God commands us to love our neighbour whatever his/her sexuality, race, religion, nationality social standing. We are called to love all our neighbours equally. The Bible is clear that not to do so is a serious sin. In fact, God says that if we don't love them, we don't love him. We must love and respect our homosexual neighbour as ourselves.

I have always sought to show love and respect for homosexuals. I have had extensive dialogue with them and two experiences confirm my respect.

I once spoke at a meeting at Birmingham University about the biblical teaching on homosexual practice. There was a demonstration against me outside the venue. I spoke and answered questions in my normal respectful way. Some of the questions were from demonstrators who had come into the meeting (wearing their campaign badges). I was very encouraged when, towards the end of the evening, one of them (whose questions I had answered) said publicly "You're not such a bad bloke are you." I took that as a strong approval of my respectful approach.

On another occasion I was involved in a TV debate in Norwich with a number of homosexuals. I caught the train back to London and sat with a number of them. We chatted at length and eventually one of them, who had a leading role in a gay church in London, invited me to take a Communion service at that church. I didn't feel able to accept but that is another approval of my respectful approach to homosexuals.

However, loving our homosexual neighbour does not mean that we have to agree with him/her. Love is consistent with respectful disagreement. I believe in the biblical teaching that sex is a wonderful gift of God to be fully enjoyed within the context of heterosexual marriage. Nevertheless, I believe homosexuals should be given strong support to face the emotional pressures on them (including facing hateful reactions from some people).