

Living for Jesus at work

| A collection of advice,
wisdom and guidance



evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



“Encouraging, practical and wise – I’m looking forward to passing on copies to all at my church.”

– **Ed Shaw, pastor of Emmanuel City Centre, ministry director of livingout.org**

“Living for Jesus at work is an excellent resource that sets out simply and clearly how to live out the difference that Jesus makes in your work. It makes accessible the best advice and ideas on being a Christian in the workplace and inspires readers to be distinctive and courageous disciples.”

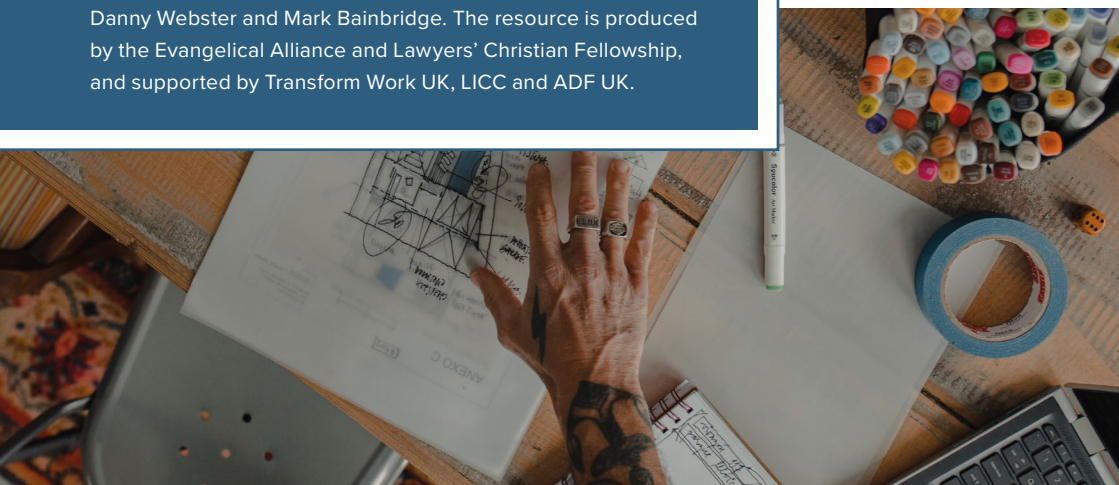
– **Ruth Walker, non-executive director, mentor and LICC’s transforming work ambassador**

“It has been a huge honour for TWUK to support the creation of *Living for Jesus at work*. We are grateful for the inclusion of sections that promote the value of workplace groups and endorse these visionary, relevant, well-researched and thoughtful educational materials and tools, with their huge potential to transform the work experience of any believer in their career journey – from student to experienced employee, from volunteer to CEO, fulfilling the calling of Jesus not only to speak but to live for Him and thus enrich and redeem the world of work in its great God-given variety.”

– **Julian Shellard, chair of the board of trustees and director of Transform Work UK**

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Introduction

Jesus calls us to follow Him, and this involves commitment in all aspects of our lives. He calls us to live for Him in the workplace, which for many of us is where we interact most with those who do not yet know Him. We are to live as salt and light, talking with our colleagues about Jesus, influencing our organisations and encouraging integrity in how the organisation behaves. None of this is easy, but this is our calling to live for Jesus at work.

Living for Jesus has never been easy. Just as Jesus promised His first disciples, “in this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33), so it remains true for Christians today. In workplaces across the UK, Christians face new and developing challenges to their faith. As culture moves past its once foundational Christian values and further into a ‘post-Christian’ era, there is more scrutiny of words and actions than ever before.

However, with new challenges come new opportunities to build relationships with those we work with, and share something of Jesus. According to research by Savanta ComRes for Tearfund in May 2020, nearly half of adults in the UK (44%) said they pray, and one in twenty (5%) said they had started praying during the lockdown though they didn’t pray before.¹

In law, there is a difference between a ‘worker’ and an ‘employee’. In broad terms, an ‘employee’ works under a contract of employment. They have to do the work personally, their employer has a significant degree of control over how they do their work, and there is a mutual obligation to provide and to complete work in return for an agreed salary and other benefits. If a person has considerable freedom and flexibility about when and how they do their work and is able to accept or reject work without

penalty, they are more likely to be a ‘worker’. Workers have fewer rights than an employee (for example, no protection against unfair dismissal), but they do have some legal protection (for example, protection against unlawful discrimination).





With this resource, we seek to equip and empower Christians to glorify Christ as they live for Him in their workplace. We will lay out the freedom, rights and responsibilities Christians have and how they apply in the workplace, as well as providing guidance to Christians about how they can share the good news of Jesus with those they interact with at work. This resource also offers wisdom to enable Christian workers and employees to respond to tricky issues of conscience they might face at work.

Christians can feel isolated in the workplace, and Christian workplace groups are a wonderful way to remain encouraged and accountable as well as being a powerful way to share the good news with colleagues through outreach. We will explore how to find or start a Christian workplace group and how to make the most of support from our church communities.

This guide is based on the legal situation as it applies in the UK. Many of the principles are transferable to other legal jurisdictions but you should always check local requirements.

Living for Jesus at work has been informed by a survey conducted by the Evangelical Alliance in November 2021, together with the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship (LCF) and Transform Work UK (TWUK).² Gathering insights and experiences of Christians in the workplace meant we could create a resource that would be more useful as we spoke into the issues, questions and challenges that people face as they aim to live for Jesus at work. The survey received 581 responses. For your encouragement, throughout this resource we have included some of the experiences which participants shared of talking about Jesus with people in their workplace.

"[Speaking to colleagues about Jesus] is quite nerve wracking, but the perception and anticipation is worse than the reality. When people are willing to talk, it is very rewarding and encouraging."

– Senior manager at a local authority

Guidance, not legal advice

The content of this resource is guidance and cannot replace specific legal or pastoral advice addressing individual circumstances. None of the authors or contributors accept any responsibility for reliance placed upon it, because every workplace and opportunity to share faith will have its own context and nuances. The guidance contained in this resource is necessarily general and cannot predict the many opportunities to share faith that may arise or the many different workplace contexts.

The law is changing all the time. We will seek to update substantive changes to the law on our website, eauk.co.uk/livingforjesusatwork where you can also find more detailed information and links to other helpful organisations. Please refer to this website for further information about the guidance below. Importantly, should you have concerns about the possible legal consequences of a particular course of action, then it will be wise to seek specific advice first and to act second.



1. Good foundations

Jesus tells us the most important commandment is to love the Lord “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). The call is to use our whole lives to love and serve the Lord, including our work lives. We live for Jesus at work out of love for the Lord, and so that others might come to know Him.

This first section provides foundational principles to build upon and help you as you seek to live for Jesus at work.

See God’s purpose

It can be tempting to compartmentalise our ‘Christian life’ and our ‘work life’. However, if we approach our work confident that God has a strategic purpose in placing us there, we are likely to find it more natural to live out our faith at work. God intends to use you to transform the lives of people and the culture of organisations – your work is a truly special, God-given opportunity for you!

God created us in His image as workers (Genesis 2:2) and is concerned about you, your colleagues, and the organisation you work in. Jesus came for all people, from all walks of life, no matter how unlikely that might feel in your work environment. Jesus started His adult life as a carpenter, and throughout His ministry, told parables relating to work and ministered in the marketplace. Whatever your role may be, God can use you to bring the good news of Jesus to those you work with. Jesus calls us not only to speak of Him but to protect and defend others (Isaiah 1:17) and enrich our workplaces. Through this we love our neighbour (Mark 12:31) and bring salt and light to our workplaces (Matthew 5:13–16), which will ultimately promote Jesus too. You may be the only Christian that some of your colleagues know, and while that might feel like a lot of pressure, it is a wonderful opportunity. We get to partner with God in His mission – He is in control, but it is exciting to think about the way He may intend to use you in His plans.

“I’ve asked customers if I can pray for them before (when appropriate). When people ask why I’m so happy/cheery, it’s an opportunity to point to Jesus as the source. Customers see my cross necklace or Bible verse tattoos and ask about it. Because of those outward ‘symbols’, it helps keep me accountable to always bear a positive witness for Christ.”

– Post Office clerk

Be authentic

Being open about your Christian faith to your employer and colleagues is one of the best things you can do to live for Christ in the workplace. Throughout the Bible, God calls His people to speak about their relationship with Him and live in a way that reflects that they are His. However, there are several reasons why Christians might find it difficult to be public about their faith in Jesus at work.

It may feel as though there has not been an appropriate time to bring it up, particularly if you predominately interact with colleagues online.

Perhaps you are concerned that if your peers know you are a Christian, they might leap to negative conclusions about you. You might also be worried that people would take offence at what you believe, or that you might be excluded socially and perhaps even professionally.

Maybe you are simply embarrassed – you believe in Jesus, but don't want to be associated with all the controversy He can bring. You would much rather just keep your faith to yourself.

Being open about our faith is certainly challenging, but it is a challenge we are to take seriously. Jesus said in Luke 9:26, "Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory." The Christian faith is personal, but not private. If most, or all of your colleagues do not know that you are a Christian, reflect on how you might be able to change that.

Being open about your Christian faith could be the key to correcting misinformation about Christianity as your colleagues see the authentic life of a Christian lived out. This doesn't mean it has to be all you talk about. Rather, it means not hiding who you are as a Christian and feeling free to speak about it when it's relevant or appropriate.

"In one of my first jobs, my colleague became a Christian and is still my best friend! Since then, I have had meaningful relationships with several colleagues that have involved me sharing my faith with them, occasionally to the degree where I was able to bring them to church or an event."

– Head of a publishing firm

By living for Jesus at work, we can help our employers know that Christianity is not a cultural label, a Sunday activity, or simply a set of rules we follow, but intrinsic to who we are. Religious literacy and understanding are low in the UK, and we cannot expect people to understand what the Christian faith means unless we are willing to show them in words and deeds.

Religion or belief are protected characteristics in law along with age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex and sexual orientation. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of any of these characteristics. So just as a worker should be safe to express any of these other characteristics of themselves to their employer or colleagues, Christians should feel able to express their faith.



The longer we wait to tell those around us that we are a Christian, the harder it will be to do so. Start a job by being known as a Christian, and live, work and speak in a way that demonstrates what that means.

Look for opportunities in conversations with your managers and team to bring up the fact that you're a Christian and, if appropriate, explain something about what this means, or the impact that your faith has on your life (for example, that you have commitments to your church). If your employer understands how important your faith is to you, this will hopefully create a helpful basis if a concern around this area, such as a moral or ethical dilemma, ever comes up.

Isn't it too late?

If you have been in a job for a significant amount of time already, and those you work with don't know that you are a Christian, it may feel daunting, but hopefully not an insurmountable obstacle.

You could ask a friend at church to pray with you about it and keep you accountable. This doesn't need to be a big announcement; why not simply start to incrementally mention your Christian faith when people talk about their weekends, for example? Follow-up questions may well come, and you'll need to be prepared to answer these honestly.

If someone asks why you've never mentioned the fact that you are a Christian, you can be honest. Explain what you were concerned about, and if you feel the need to, you can always apologise for not being more open. It is likely that people will understand and appreciate your honesty.

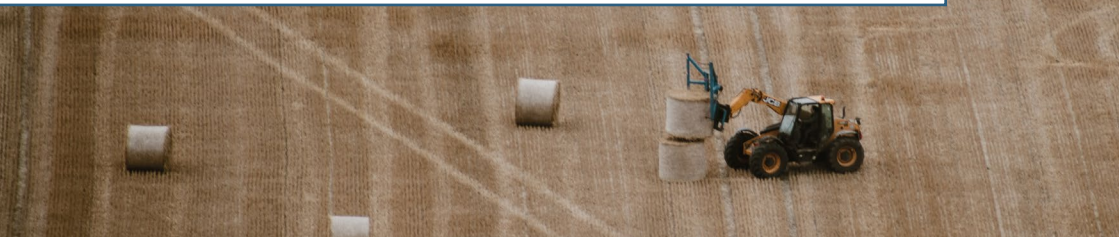
Be committed to your job

First and foremost, we are at our workplaces to do a job, remembering that as Christians we are ultimately “working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23). Christians are called to be people of integrity, and that means we honour the commitment we have made to our employer. When we see our work as an act of worship and service to God and others, we can become some of the best employees. Our motivation is to do our work in a way that glorifies God, rather than simply a desire to please our bosses, earn money or improve our status.

This may also help when it comes to explaining our faith to our employers and addressing any concerns employers might have about employing a Christian. We can explain that being a Christian means, in part, that we seek to do the very best work that we can, recognising our responsibility to God as well as to our employer.

The way we work can be a great way for Christians to stand out among colleagues who do not yet know Jesus. Reflect on the social norms at your workplace and consider how you could clearly live for Christ in those areas.

- Do people gossip about your boss or other colleagues? ***Be distinctive by speaking up, changing the subject, or removing yourself from those conversations.***
- Do people bill more hours than they work, or get away with doing less work than they are meant to? ***Be distinctive in honouring your employer and working hard, with integrity.***
- Do people tend to over-work? ***How can you demonstrate that your identity is found in Jesus, not in your work, while honouring your employer and colleagues, patients, customers, clients, or others?***
- Do people put others down to lift themselves up? ***Be distinctive by looking to serve others, and by valuing other people's interests.***



2. Workplace culture

Cultural themes of our time

The social and cultural context of the UK today affects how we live out our faith at work. Culture is a hard thing to define, but here we are thinking about some of the tensions and trends that underpin the general ideas and behaviours that are considered ‘normal’ and ‘right’ and ‘good’ in the UK workplace. Of course, these will vary across different sectors and industries.

There are many cultural tensions in the UK today. In a poll by YouGov conducted in November 2021, more than half of Britons (57%) said they sometimes refrain from expressing political and social views for fear of being judged.³ They are most likely to keep quiet about what they really think when they are with people they’ve just met (49%) or are at work (40%), according to the data. A third (31%) also self-censor with friends, and a fifth (21%) with family.

As Christians, it should not surprise us that we sit in opposition to some cultural trends. In the Bible, Jesus warns His followers that people will hate them because of Him (Matthew 10:22), and we are told that people will believe lies over the truth (2 Timothy 4:4). The UK is often considered ‘post-Christian’, which means that the culture has moved on from a time when Christianity was an accepted norm, and at times has elements of being anti-Christian. This is the way it has been in most places across the world for most of history.

It is useful to think through where Christian values are distinctive from cultural norms and be prepared to give an answer for what we believe and “the hope that [we] have” (1 Peter 3:15). It is worth giving time to think about how we can phrase things in the most gracious, respectful, and loving way possible.

Equally, it is important to think about where we can connect with culture, identifying values that we can affirm. Jesus promised to make “all things new” (Revelation 21:5), and Paul spoke of how he became “all things to all people so that by all possible means [he] might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). These verses show us that Christians are not to separate themselves off from those who don’t know Jesus and remove ourselves from culture. Rather, we inhabit these spaces, in the hope that God might work through us, redeeming both culture and people, as He has promised.

Questions for reflection:

- What are some things that define your workplace culture?
- In what ways does your Christian faith make you feel distant from the culture?
- In what ways does your Christian faith allow you to relate to it?

Being in the world, but not of the world

As Christians, we are called to walk the difficult line of being in the world, but not of the world (John 17:15). This means we are to take an active role in our workplaces and communities, while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.

We want to understand our colleagues who do not know Jesus, empathise with their concerns and struggles, celebrate what is good, treat them with compassion and dignity, and yet resist loving all that they love. We are called to be salt and light, enriching the culture and reflecting the goodness of Jesus (Matthew 5:13–16).

Jeremiah 29 is a fantastic reminder of how God intended life for His people to be when they were removed from their home and placed in an unknown and ungodly land. In this passage, we see God telling His people who are in exile to build homes and make roots until He comes to call them home. In verse 7, He tells them to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city”, even though



they are exiles in a hostile environment. In doing this, God's people sought to model life with God by how they lived and worked, so that others would see their lives and seek to know God for themselves.

However, God also tells His people to be alert to the lies that are being spread in the culture around them (Jeremiah 29:8).

Today, we are to put down roots and invest in those around us while we wait for Jesus' return and for God to make this world His perfect home. As we live and work for God, we are to assess the culture we inhabit so that our lives bear witness to God's character and value, so that those we do life with might want to know God for themselves. If we pretend that there is no difference between ourselves and those who do not know Jesus, we risk representing Him poorly. This is a particular danger at work, where workplace cultures can be strong and we can be afraid of being isolated or losing our livelihoods.

To counter this, it helps to be deliberate about our identity as Christians at work, an identity to which our colleagues will hold us accountable, as well as having Christian support networks, such as workplace groups, or praying friends or family.

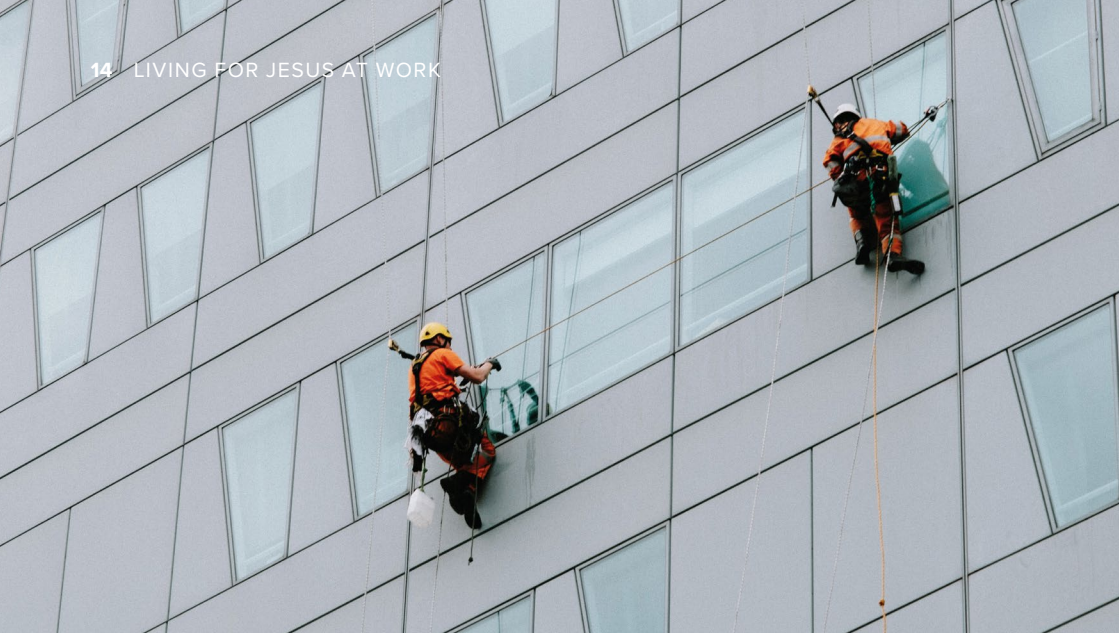
Daniel serves as a great example of how, as God's people, there are ways that we can adapt to the culture we are in, but be clear on the lines that we will not cross. Daniel took on a new culturally normal name and served the king and the nation he was in, but he would not worship another god, or eat food sacrificed to other gods (Daniel 1:7–8).

We must fix our eyes on God and desire to serve Him as we invest in our colleagues and workplaces.



Public Leadership

If you're in your 20s or 30s and are interested in intentionally and strategically making a difference in the workplace, look at the Evangelical Alliance's Public Leader programme: a 10-month journey with teaching, mentoring, residential weekends, and opportunities to connect with senior and other emerging leaders. The programme supports young professionals and emerging leaders to follow Jesus in every walk of life.⁴



Misconceptions and assumptions we may face

In November 2021, we ran a survey aimed at Christians in the workplace. We asked participants what the most common misconceptions were that their colleagues had about the Christian faith. We had 581 responses.

This was an open-ended question and therefore the results were varied, but the three most common types of answer could be summarised as follows:

- Christians are bigoted with hateful views.
- Christianity is all about following rules and trying to be a “good person”.
- Christians are boring and look down on others.

Some of the misconceptions shared have come about because of harm that Christians, or people who call themselves Christian, have done in the past. Where that is the case, it is important to be gracious, and it may be appropriate to apologise on their behalf for the harm that has been done. However, as the Talking Jesus research demonstrates, non-Christians often have a more positive view of Christians they know than we might think.

“When I was a subordinate, I was sometimes ridiculed openly. When I became the boss, I was ridiculed privately! However, speaking to former colleagues some years later, I know that sharing my faith has impacted them and I am now respected for it.”

— Law costs draftsman

Christians known as friendly, caring, and good-humoured

As part of the Talking Jesus research (conducted in February 2022 by Alpha, the Evangelical Alliance, HOPE Together, Kingsgate Community Church and the Luis Palau Association), people who knew a practising Christian were asked what they thought of that person.⁵ The top traits were friendly (62%), caring (50%), good-humoured (33%) and generous (32%). The most negative traits that non-Christians chose to describe the Christian they knew were narrowminded or naive (10% altogether), and hypocritical (10%). But overwhelmingly, the Christians who are known were perceived to have positive traits by non-Christians.

The non-Christians surveyed had a more negative view of the church than of the individual Christian they know. The top two traits for the church were negative (hypocritical and narrowminded, 26% each), though the third trait was positive (friendly, 22%).

This means that it is the individual Christian who is the best bridge for evangelism. There is a positive relationship and identification with that person, over a more generic and negative perception of the church. Relying on a general draw from the church is going to be more problematic in reaching non-Christians and shows why personal evangelism, invitation and witness are so vital.

As Christians, we are to be slow to take offence, and instead aim to understand how people have reached these conclusions, so that we can respond winsomely with grace, humility, and love. When seeking to share Jesus with those around us, there is huge value in asking good questions and listening well to the answers, as well as speaking.

One approach that may help is to (A) acknowledge their viewpoint, (B) build a bridge, and (C) cross the bridge by introducing them to the Jesus story, explaining how His life and death make a difference to the issues they are concerned about.

Using this method, let's explore how we might respond to the three most common misconceptions identified in our survey.

Christians are motivated by love, not judgement

If we're in a situation where we feel we have to talk about our personal views, it is incredibly important to demonstrate that Christians do not hate or fear people with views different to their own.

There are some areas of culture where the Christian worldview may clash with other popular worldviews. For example, discussing orthodox Christian views of sexuality and gender can be challenging and is to be done with care and sensitivity.

We can sometimes have personal biases that we are not even aware of, that may impact the way we treat certain people. Take time to reflect, confess these to God and pray about them. Jesus calls us to “love [our] neighbour” (Mark 12:31), “value others above [ourselves]” (Philippians 2:3), and not to judge others (Matthew 7:1). Make an effort to form genuine relationships and build bridges with all people you interact with at work – regardless of their approach to relationships and gender. Be someone who speaks of love, but also lives it out in the way you treat others.

It is sometimes suggested that loving someone requires affirming every aspect of their view of themselves and their lifestyle. Conversely, some Christians seem to think that loving someone requires pointedly condemning everything in their lives that is contrary to God's plan. As Christians, instead we seek to manifest “truth in love” and “be kind and compassionate” (Ephesians 4:15, 32), seeking to treat others with Christ-like gentleness and care. We are to navigate these conversations with great care, and above all, be gentle, never seeking an argument or to cause offence (Philippians 4:5).

How might you respond?

Acknowledge that Christian views on marriage, sexual ethics and gender are shaped by the Bible, and may be different from common views on these topics. Build a bridge by saying that human identity and sexuality are really important aspects of human life, and that they are important to you because they are important to God. Finally, cross the bridge and introduce them to Jesus, explaining how He (controversially and deliberately) chose people from minority groups, the vulnerable and the broken, and close with a simple statement about how following Him has changed your life.

Christianity is about who I know, not what I do

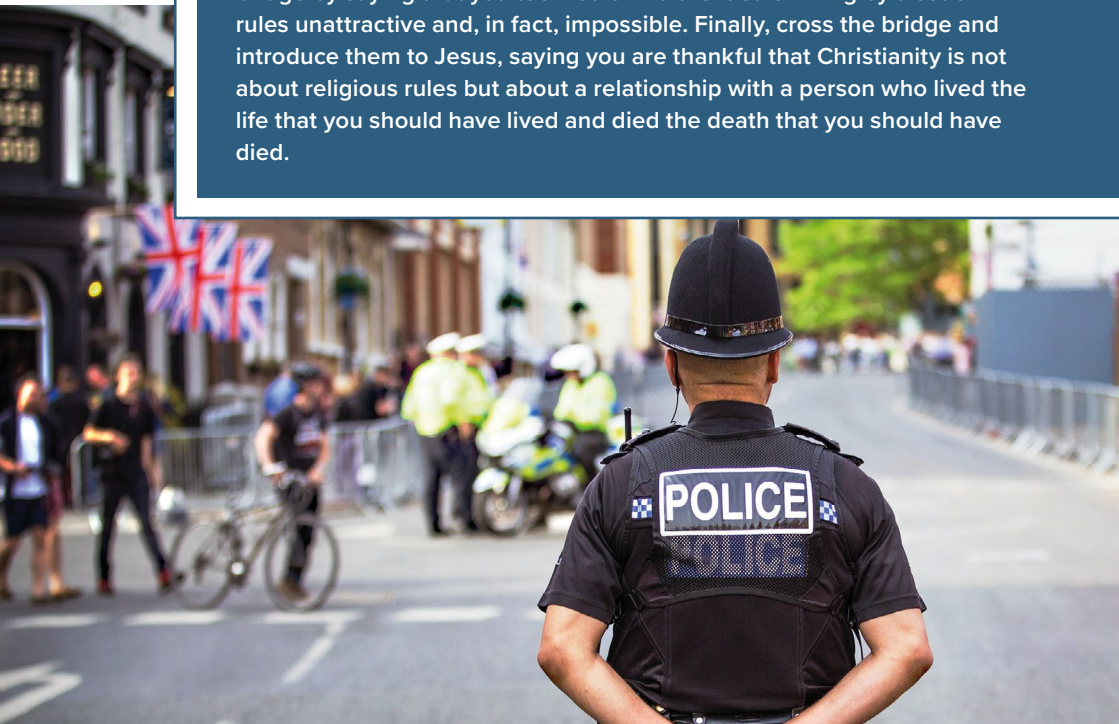
Many people have a limited understanding of the Christian faith, and what they do know may be informed by stereotypes or things they've seen in popular culture. It is a very common misconception that Christianity is about what you do, rather than a relationship with God.

It is also often far easier, if someone asks about our Christian faith, to speak about what we do, as opposed to what we believe. This can feel more relatable, or easier to understand, but it doesn't solve the problem.

So, if given the opportunity to speak about your Christian faith, try not to speak only about going to church, and the other activities you do which are a by-product of being a Christian. Instead, try to share something of your relationship with God, and who you believe He is.

How might you respond?

Acknowledge that Christians are often known for what they won't do rather than by the difference that Jesus makes in their lives. Build a bridge by saying that you too would find the idea of living by a set of rules unattractive and, in fact, impossible. Finally, cross the bridge and introduce them to Jesus, saying you are thankful that Christianity is not about religious rules but about a relationship with a person who lived the life that you should have lived and died the death that you should have died.



Christians are free

Another common misconception is that Christians are boring people, allergic to fun, stemming from a misunderstanding of the character of God, and misrepresentations in popular culture.

The best thing Christians can do to deal with this misconception is to know the character of God ourselves, by reading the accounts of Jesus' life in the four Gospels.

In the Bible, we see Jesus feasting with friends and strangers and socialising with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. He turned water into wine at a wedding when the host's wine ran out. Thousands gathered around Him to hear Him speak. All of this testifies to the fact that Jesus is not a boring person. People either loved Him or hated Him, but no one found Him boring.

Our attitude to the ups and downs of life can be a powerful demonstration of faith to those around us, demonstrating that as Christians we have a hope that cannot "perish, spoil or fade" (1 Peter 1:4). What this looks like for each Christian will be slightly different, as we live for Him within the parameters of our God-given personalities, but trust that as colleagues get to know you, and see your Christian faith lived out, they will come to know that Christians, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are loving, peaceful and joyful.

Most of all, as people look at our Christian lives, we hope they see that we are free. Being a Christian means that you are totally known and eternally loved, freeing us from the need to please others, or look and act a certain way, because our identity is found in Jesus, in whom we are totally secure.

How might you respond?

Acknowledge that when people see Christians choosing not to do certain things, they can perceive them as boring. Build a bridge by agreeing that you want your life, a life which you live by faith, to count, and be full of joy. Cross the bridge and introduce them to Jesus, explaining that He lived life to the full, and say that by living in relationship with Him you have experienced more joy, and hope, and life, than you could have previously imagined.

3. Living out your faith

Sharing your faith at work

We are called to share our faith and be ambassadors for Christ. In most cases, employers will not be concerned about Christian workers sensitively discussing Jesus and religious issues with workmates, in the same way that they might talk about sport, hobbies and family life. Giving employees the freedom to bring their whole selves to work helps with wellbeing and can ensure a happier, better-performing workforce.

That said, sharing your faith at work calls for wisdom. If done insensitively, or forcefully, or in circumstances where a colleague has made it clear the conversation is unwanted, they or your employer may take action. It is also likely that a different approach is called for, depending on whether you are speaking with a colleague or someone external such as a client or customer – it is important that we don't abuse any power we might have. You can find more information, advice, and wisdom on the subject by looking at our companion resource, *Speak Up*.



“A colleague was going through a very difficult time and I shared how my faith in Jesus is the most important thing in my life and I know I can turn to Him in tough times as well as good times. I said I would be praying for him each day. I let him know regularly that I was remembering him and encouraged him through quick chats, texts and cards. He was very touched by this and through this and the prayers and example of other Christian friends and colleagues, he came to faith.”

– Vice principal

Here are five top tips (using the acronym SPEAK) to help you to share your faith sensitively and effectively:

S**Start with prayer**

Start with prayer. Prayer is the start of every great story with Jesus, and it's always wise to start by asking God for wisdom, words, and winsomeness. Are you praying for your colleagues, clients or customers, before speaking to them about Jesus? Are you praying during your conversations and after?

Can you pray with a colleague? There are different ways of handling this, but sensitivity is crucial. Gently suggesting that you will be thinking and praying for someone is less likely to cause an issue than asking someone if they want to stop and pray about a situation there and then, but it might not be as strong a witness.

P**Prioritise your work**

Christians believe that work is an area of service to God (Ephesians 6:6), and therefore strive to do a good job. Your attitude to work and the work that you do should demonstrate your faith in Jesus, and not detract from the Christian message.

There is no substitute for telling others about God's salvation plan for them, but there will be times and situations in workplaces where this may not be possible or wise. If a conversation needs more time than is appropriate at work, or if someone wants to discuss something particularly personal regarding faith, suggest carrying on that conversation outside working hours and in a different place.

E**Explain your Christian faith**

Explain the impact that the Christian faith has on your life and day-to-day thinking. If you are expressing an opinion rooted in your Christian beliefs, you have greater legal protection than if it is simply expressed as your own thoughts on a topic. For this reason, it is helpful to explain how your faith informs your opinions. Ongoing natural discussions are always better than forced, isolated occasions. Foster a culture of conversation about faith. By mentioning your faith naturally and frequently in conversations, it won't feel like such a big deal when someone wants to discuss Christian things with you.

A

Aim to build gospel bridges

Aim to build bridges that can bear the weight of the Christian message, by doing your job well, and by being salt and light. When there is an opportunity to share your Christian faith with someone, it is important to ask questions and listen, not just talk. The more you take a genuine interest in their life and worldview, the more they will be likely to want to hear about yours. A dialogue is less likely to cause an issue than a monologue, confrontation, or argument. Rather than stating your opinion as a blunt fact, put it in context – help them understand how and why you reached your conclusion, and share your personal testimony.

As you share the Jesus story, pray for words of “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12). An opinion expressed gently will be better received and more difficult to criticise. The Christian message is not one of argumentative provocation but one of loving challenge. As Timothy and Paul said, we should “let [our] gentleness be evident to all” (Philippians 4:5).

K

Know when to stop

Always ensure that you afford others and their beliefs the respect you wish yours to receive. This encourages a workplace culture where everyone can enjoy the same rights and freedoms when it comes to faith. When speaking to a colleague about your faith, check that they are happy to engage in/continue with the conversation.

If you are in a position of authority, you need to be sensitive to that and not abuse your power. If a colleague makes it clear that faith discussions are unwelcome, you should not pursue them, nor should you treat that individual unfavourably as a result. If someone is clearly not enjoying the conversation, express appreciation and then change the subject.

“My client seemed to think I was religious, so she asked about my faith, so I shared simply with her.”

– Hairdresser



Ambassadors for Christ

“When I was at the pub, certain people from work would show an interest in religious matters (they would bring it up). I asked one of these people to a Christianity Explored course at work, and I asked another if they would like to read the Bible. I took her through the book of Luke and answered many philosophical objections and questions to Christianity over 18 months, meeting about once or twice a month.”

– Economist

When we hear the term ‘ambassador’, our first thought may be of a diplomat who stands as a representative for their country in foreign places. This aligns with the call for God’s people; in 2 Corinthians 5:20, we read: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

By being “Christ’s ambassadors”, we seek to represent God to those around us by the way we speak and act. When our colleagues look at the way we speak and treat people, we pray that they will see, reflected in us, something of the character of God, and be drawn to ask us questions about it, or want to know God for themselves.

Here are just some ways that you could be an ambassador for Christ in your workplace:

- Refuse to speak negatively of others behind their backs.
- Avoid being sucked into crude or cruel humour.

“So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”
– Matthew 7:12

- Be willing to serve your colleagues, by offering to make them a drink, or by helping them to succeed in their work.
- Treat all colleagues with equal dignity and respect, irrespective of their status or role.
- If you are served by others in your workplace, treat them with the same respect as you would a colleague.

“Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.’”
– Mark 9:35

- Be inclusive in work-related social events.
- Take the time to get to know your colleagues, ask about their lives and listen well.
- Be gracious when someone makes a mistake which affects you.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”
– Colossians 3:12

“A colleague on a training course saw my Christian Police Association lanyard and asked if he could ask me more about it, he seemed to have been seeking for answers and searching for God for a long time but not found faith yet. We discussed my faith at length and still keep in touch. He asked me for a CPA Bible.”

– Police officer

Engaging with inclusion, diversity and equality in the workplace

Christians should be the best at advocating for equal dignity and respect, as we believe that all people are created in the image of God, and therefore every human's worth is equal, valuable and inherent. There may be some matters that fall under issues of inclusion, diversity and equality, which, as Christians, we feel hesitant to get involved with. However, there are many aspects that the Bible informs us are important areas for Christians to encourage. We will look at some specific examples in the following sections.

Scripture shows us that worth is not something based on a person's abilities or any other factor, but intrinsic to who they are as image-bearers of the living God (Genesis 1). Therefore, it is important that as Christians we are seen as people who support inclusion and diversity in the workplace. This bears witness that we believe in a God of justice, who bestows equal value and dignity on all human life. What a beautiful witness it would be to the God who created and loves all people if Christians were known as advocates for seeing people treated fairly.

In order to do this well, we must take time to reflect and consider whether we have any personal biases or misconceptions about particular groups or characteristics that may impact the way we treat certain people. If there are, it is important to ask for God's forgiveness and help to see everyone's value and dignity as He does.

It is also worth considering that Christians are protected from unlawful discrimination and harassment (under the broader concept of “religion or belief”). Therefore, by living in accordance with our rights and freedoms and advocating for good protections and fair treatment now, we will help to preserve those rights and freedoms for future generations of Christians at work. It may be helpful to work with any multifaith networks in your workplace to ensure that Christians are represented within diversity and inclusion programmes.

4. The law

Much of the content of this resource relates to acting wisely. It is also important to be aware of what the law says and how it might relate to your workplace. While there are significant protections for your freedom of expression in the workplace, you will also be governed by contractual obligations and other documents such as your work's code of conduct, which may place limits on what you can do or say.⁶

We are fortunate to live in a tolerant and diverse society which robustly safeguards the rights to freedom of belief and to freedom of expression for everyone – regardless of whether religious beliefs are involved or not – and these fundamental freedoms are enshrined in both domestic and international law. Employers should be well-acquainted with the relevant law in this area to safeguard against disruptive and costly legal disputes. The legislation outlined below protects the rights of employees with or without religious faith to manifest their beliefs in the workplace, and prevents employers from discriminating against employees (or treating them less favourably) on the grounds of their religious beliefs, whether directly or indirectly.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in the workplace and beyond. The Equality Act safeguards nine “protected characteristics” in law. The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



The Act prevents discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic, as well as protecting people who are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. In the employment context, the four main forms of discrimination prohibited by the Equality Act are:

Direct discrimination against Christians. This is where employees are treated less favourably because of their Christian beliefs. Examples of direct discrimination might include the dismissal of an employee for respectfully expressing an opinion because it derives from their Christian beliefs, or a decision not to hire a job applicant because they attend church.

Indirect discrimination against Christians. This is where an employer implements a generally applicable policy, scheme or practice that particularly disadvantages people with Christian beliefs. Indirect discrimination can be justified if the proposed policy, scheme or practice is proportionate and has a legitimate business aim. Examples of indirect discrimination might include an internal requirement for all staff members to attend a client event on a Sunday morning, or a rule that requires all staff members to wear badges or other similar items in support of a cause that conflicts with a Christian's beliefs.

Harassment of Christians. In the legal sense, this would be where an employer or fellow employee engages in “unwanted conduct” relating to their beliefs, and the conduct either “violates [the Christian’s] dignity”, or it creates (or is intended to create) an “intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” for the Christian. Examples of harassment might be where a colleague repeatedly uses Jesus’ name in vain or as an expletive, when speaking to a Christian employee, despite repeated requests for the colleague to refrain from doing so, or where a Christian employee is consistently ridiculed by colleagues for their views on abortion or marriage.

Victimisation of Christians. In the legal sense, this would be where a Christian is treated badly because they have complained about or brought legal proceedings about religion or belief discrimination or done anything else for the purposes of or in connection with the Equality Act. An example of victimisation might be where an employer makes an employee redundant because they have raised a grievance about religion or belief discrimination.



The Equality Act 2010 does not apply in Northern Ireland, however, similar protected characteristics exist in Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 also provides for specific protections based on religious belief and political opinion.

European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights sets out a number of fundamental human rights guaranteed to all citizens of the member states of the Council of Europe, which includes the United Kingdom. Two of the rights contained within the Convention and included in the UK Human Rights Act are particularly relevant:

Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief, in worship, teaching practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 10: Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.⁷

Whistleblowing

The law protects workers from suffering a detriment or being dismissed because they have reported (ie made a protected disclosure about) certain types of wrongdoing. It is worth noting that personal grievances (for example, bullying, harassment, and discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your case is in the public interest. More information is available on the government webpage: gov.uk/whistleblowing

Employment contracts

An employment relationship is largely shaped by an agreement known as the contract of employment. An employment contract is made up of express terms (those stated and accepted verbally and/or in writing), imposed and implied terms (matters not stated and accepted, but which are required by law, or introduced by custom and practice or by necessity), and by statutory terms (typically conditions and rights imposed by law). It is important to read employment terms before accepting them to ensure that you understand them, and to check that there are no provisions, criteria, or practices which you may find difficult to comply with because of your Christian faith. For example, have a look at the days you are required or expected to work. If a term is unclear, ask your employer to explain its meaning (preferably in writing). You may need to amend the term so that it says what is intended more clearly or to make it acceptable to you. If you are concerned about proposed employment terms, seek legal advice before accepting them.



There have been a number of significant cases in recent years in which employers, tribunals and the courts have sought to establish how religious freedoms and employment policies work together. The following case summaries demonstrate the complexity of these issues.

Religious symbols in the workplace

In 2013, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled in favour of Nadia Eweida, in a dispute over wearing a small cross necklace at work. Eweida was employed by British Airways, who asked her to remove her cross necklace in line with their policy on jewellery at work. The ECtHR found that British Airways' interference was "disproportionate" with regard to her right to manifest her religious beliefs, noting that other religious symbols like hijabs and turbans were permitted.



In a related case, however, the ECtHR ruled against nurse Sarah Chaplin on a similar issue. While the court accepted that the conduct of the NHS Trust that employed her interfered with her freedom to manifest her religion, they thought this interference was proportionate to the health and safety risks involved, something which they thought the hospital managers were in a better position than they were to assess.

A more recent case concerned a Christian nurse, Mary Onuoha, who worked primarily in surgical theatre. Onuoha was also asked to remove her cross necklace while at work. She refused, explaining that she wore it for religious reasons. Over the next four years, Onuoha was asked on multiple occasions to remove the cross, which led to disciplinary and grievance proceedings. Onuoha eventually resigned, claiming constructive dismissal and unlawful discrimination on the grounds of her Christian faith.

In December 2021, the Employment Tribunal ruled in her favour. They found that the Trust had discriminated against Onuoha in a number of ways: many other members of staff wore jewellery, including necklaces, and other items of religious apparel, with broadly comparable health and safety risks, were allowed.



Beliefs and religious convictions in the workplace

Adrian Smith, a manager at Trafford Housing Trust, posted comments on Facebook about the legalisation of gay marriage in churches, stating it was “an equality too far”. An exchange of posts between Mr Smith and his work colleagues ensued, with some colleagues opposing his stance. The posts were made outside of work hours and were only visible to his Facebook friends.

Nevertheless, the Trust instigated disciplinary proceedings, finding that Mr Smith had breached its code of conduct and equal opportunities policy. Mr Smith was demoted. He brought a breach of contract claim in the High Court, which ruled that the Trust did not have the right to demote Smith because of his Facebook postings. Damages were paid but Smith was not reinstated.

The case of *McFarlane v The United Kingdom* involved Mr McFarlane, a Relate counsellor, whose role included providing counselling services to same-sex couples. After several years, McFarlane commenced training to be a psychosexual therapist and his role was extended to giving advice on couples’ sexual problems. In this capacity, Mr McFarlane expressed reservations about providing psychosexual therapy to same-sex couples because of his religious beliefs. This led to disciplinary proceedings and his dismissal for failing to uphold the employer’s equal opportunities policy.

Mr McFarlane claimed in an employment tribunal he was wrongly and unfairly dismissed, and that he had been directly and indirectly discriminated against. The case eventually went to the ECtHR, which upheld his dismissal. The court unanimously decided that the most important factor was that the employer’s action was intended to secure the implementation of its policy of providing a service without discrimination.

5. Navigating conscience issues

For Christians, our conscience is a gift because this is, in part, how the Holy Spirit directs us on what is right or wrong. It helps to be honest with our employers when we feel there is something we are unable to do in our jobs because of our conscience. However, this must always be in tension with an understanding of the job that we have signed a contract saying we will do.

There are very few specific protections in law when it comes to conscience. One of the few is a medical professional's right to conscientious objection to performing an abortion. Nevertheless, it is important to think through how we might deal with conscience issues in the workplace in the most wise and productive way.

In our November 2021 survey, respondents were asked where they felt there had been tension between their work life and their convictions in conscience as a Christian. The answers given could generally be grouped into four categories:

- There was a lack of accommodation for their Christian faith practices.
- The pressure of work meant they ran out of time for Christian practices.
- They had felt pressure to compromise their integrity.
- Issues of conscience had arisen, specifically on issues of sexuality and gender.

We are offering some wisdom and guidance for each of those areas, while acknowledging that, as always, context is crucial.



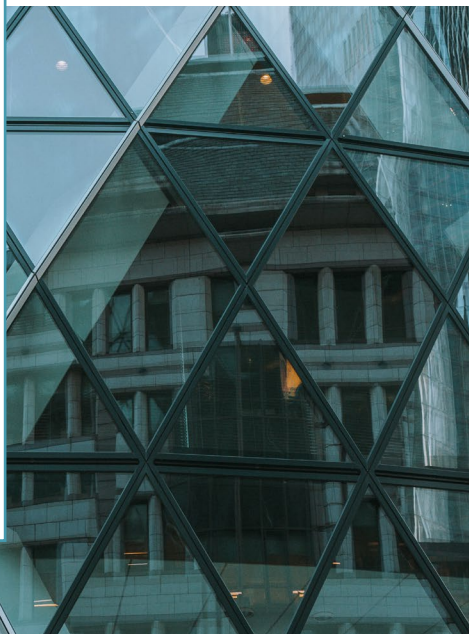
Raising concerns about discrimination

The Bible tells us that following Jesus will be challenging, because it is counter-cultural in so many ways. When Christians experience discrimination or harassment on account of their faith, they may be hesitant to complain because they understand it to be part of the cost of Christian life. However, there are a number of good reasons why you may wish to raise this with your employer.

First, it may provide you with an opportunity to explain the importance of your Christian faith. Also, as Christians, we recognise the importance of right relationships. Where the treatment of a worker by an employer or colleague is wrong, such as when they experience unlawful discrimination, God cares that the relationship or situation is put right. This reflects God's view of righteousness and justice. Raising an issue about religion or belief discrimination appropriately with an employer may improve workplace relationships, not only for you but also for your colleagues, including those of other faiths. This is one way that Christian workers can positively transform the culture of their employer organisations.

Raising concerns or making a complaint may not always be the way to achieve the best outcome. It will often be wise to seek legal advice before making formal complaints.

ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), an independent public body with the purpose of making working life better for everyone in Britain, has produced a helpful guide and a code of practice which explain how an employer should deal with grievances. These documents, together with your employer's grievance procedure and equalities policy, are a good starting point when thinking about how to voice concerns about discrimination at work. If you are experiencing discrimination at work, evidence is key to a successful resolution or claim. Make a record of what is happening and keep all relevant documents such as emails, letters, and notes.



Time

The demands of your work and your obligations to your employer may conflict with your Christian beliefs, such as your involvement and attendance at church, or the biblical instruction to make time for rest (Hebrews 4:9–10). It is very important for our spiritual wellbeing as Christians that we “do not give up meeting together” (Hebrews 10:25), so this is an area worth thinking through carefully.

For new employment, before agreeing employment terms, think about whether the proposed terms will make it difficult to balance your work commitments with your personal life. If it will, discuss this with your employer and seek a reasonable accommodation. If a prospective employer says that they will need you to work occasional weekends, and you are concerned to keep Sundays special, you could use this opportunity to explain why Sunday matters to you as a Christian and volunteer to pick up additional Saturdays instead.

For existing employment, if your employer seeks to introduce a new provision, criterion or practice which conflicts with your Christian faith, arrange a meeting with your line manager to explain your position carefully and reasonably. If you are unable to achieve an acceptable resolution with your employer, you may wish to take legal advice about the steps that you should take.

It would be good to lay out with your employer as soon as appropriate what areas of the Christian life need protecting. This will most likely include Sunday working (particularly at the time your church meets), and perhaps a mid-week meeting that is important in your Christian life – such as a Bible study group or volunteering with a youth group. Compared to many religions, there aren’t many areas that need protecting, so hopefully your request is a relatively small ask. However, it is important to be humble and gracious in these requests. Your employer’s religious literacy might be low, and therefore you might need to explain why these are important to you as a Christian.

When explaining why the time you attend church needs to be protected, it might be helpful to say something like this:

“In the Christian faith, it is important to meet together with other Christians to encourage each other and learn more about God. For many Christians, Sunday is believed to be a day which they are commanded to keep special.”

The circumstances are different if you do shift-work – for example, if you work in a hospital or in a shop. If shifts conflict with church gatherings, try to find and protect other times in the week when you can meet with Christian friends for encouragement in your faith, perhaps listen back to sermons that you missed, and find some time for intentional rest.

Integrity

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. These are intrinsic to the character of a Christian, in part to give credibility to our testimony about God. However, adhering to the truth and what we believe to be right can be challenging, depending on your work context.

The notion of truth has become increasingly blurred in cultural understanding of recent years. We hear phrases like “speak your truth”, whereas before, truth might have only been understood as a definitive term. We also see truth frequently manipulated by the spreading of misinformation, fake news and the advancement of digital technology to distort truth, such as someone’s appearance. A lie is also often given different names, such as a white lie, misleading, bluff, exaggeration, gaslighting and many others besides.

All of this means it can be easy to lose our way. This is only made harder if combined with pressure from those in authority over us at work, pressuring us to “spin the truth” a certain way, or if we feel like we might let others down in our team if we were to be completely honest.



This could include being asked by a manager to lie about their availability or being told to overcharge someone for work that you have done. In these circumstances, we must remember that we worship a God who is truth itself and who calls His people to be pillars of truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

If we desire those around us to trust that God is truth and accept what He says to be true, we must be known for our integrity. If we are people known to deviate from the truth, then how can what we say about God be trusted?

With these in mind, it is important to reflect on what that means for your job.

- Are there areas of your work where you find it easy to stretch the truth?
- Do you feel you act with integrity with all those you encounter in work (colleagues, patients, customers, clients, or others)?
- Could you share any struggles with someone at church and ask for their help to keep you accountable?
- Are there things your manager asks you to do that go against your conscience?
- Is there a conversation to be had about things you feel unable to say or do because of your Christian faith?
- Is your line of work compatible with the Christian call to truth and integrity?

It is important in all these things to remember that Christians live under grace, and that only Jesus was capable of living the perfect life. This is an opportunity to take stock and reflect on where God might be wanting to work in our lives, and make us more like Himself, by the power of His grace. All change can only happen with His help.

Sexuality and gender

Employers are increasingly seeking to create workplace cultures that include and affirm LGBTQ+ workers. This is a result of a history of mistreatment and discrimination, followed by years of campaigning for equal rights. Now businesses are seeking to treat people, whatever their sexuality or gender identity, equally. Christians whole-heartedly affirm the equal worth and dignity of every human being as the Bible teaches that we are all made in God's image. Therefore, we can speak positively about inclusion, diversity and equality. At the same time, orthodox Christian beliefs about human sexuality and gender identity can present issues of conscience for Christians in the workplace.

It is worth noting the case of *Felix Ngole v The University of Sheffield* (2019) which resulted in an important judgement from the Court of Appeal, including a particularly clear statement that, "the mere expression of religious views about sin does not necessarily connote discrimination."

In our survey, participants highlighted three particular dilemmas:

- Whether to wear rainbow lanyards.
- How to deal with gender specific email signatures.
- How to respond if someone asks to be referred to with different pronouns.



Rainbow lanyards

Many workplaces support Pride month, which is a public event held to celebrate LGBTQ+ identities, culture, and experience. This can include providing uniform for workers to wear, such as rainbow lanyards. For many Christians, to wear things such as these would conflict with their conscience, as it is supporting a movement that doesn't align with orthodox Christian sexual ethics.

Ed Shaw, pastor of Emmanuel City Centre in Bristol and author of *The Plausibility Problem* and *Purposeful Sexuality*, is also the ministry director of Living Out. Living Out aims to see Christians living out their sexuality and identity in ways that enable all to flourish in Christ-like faithfulness. Ed wrote the following article 'Should a Christian wear a rainbow lanyard?' on livingout.org:

Should a Christian wear a rainbow lanyard?

'To wear or not to wear?', that is the question. It's the challenging question a number of Christians in my church family had to answer a couple of years back when institutions and firms in our city introduced the option of rainbow lanyards in their workplaces. They were soon ubiquitous – a very public way of virtue signalling your culturally approved approval of our society's near full acceptance of LGBTQI+ people. As a result, not wearing one increasingly looked like a more significant statement than sporting the new colourful version: you were clearly marked out as being against LGBTQI+ people.

Tea and coffee times at church soon became dominated by conversations about what to do. In the absence of a biblical command about rainbow lanyards or clear biblical principles that apply directly to this particular question, I encouraged individuals to pray for wisdom (James 1:5), carefully listen to their consciences and be relaxed about landing in different places to others. (We would seem to be in Romans 14–15 territory here.)

Encouragingly, that's what most people did. The only people that discouraged me as their pastor were those who did not prayerfully think for themselves but just went with the flow of either persuasive non-Christian colleagues at work or legalistic Christian voices on social media. But thankfully, the majority saw it as an opportunity to speak and live for Jesus – even if they did that in different ways.

There were some that refused the offer of a rainbow lanyard and stuck with the previous corporate version. They saw it as an issue of integrity: they didn't want to pretend to be fully accepting of sexual practices the Bible sees as harmful, even as they seek to love every person they come into contact with. Some of them gave real thought as to what they would say if asked why they weren't wearing the rainbow colours. I encouraged them to seek to begin a conversation on this, rather than preparing lecture notes, when asked to justify their non-compliance, perhaps the best response would be to ask others why they were wearing them – this would help them pitch their response to the colleague who is LGBTQI+ themselves or is rightly wanting society to repent of homophobia or is just going with the crowd.

One church family member, a senior medic, made the bold decision not to wear the rainbow lanyard. They resented being asked to wear anything to reassure any group of their care. They stood firm in the belief that their fair treatment of LGBTQI+ patients would be in them giving them the same quality of treatment as everybody else – not by what they did or didn't wear around their neck. This pushback worked for them – as they were able to support this notion with their long track record and career history, proving the incontrovertible evidence that this is and was the case.

These two approaches show how the lanyard was interpreted differently by members of my church family (as it is also presented differently by a range of secular voices). One group in the church saw it as undermining their Christian integrity, another person saw it as primarily an attack on their professional integrity.

Still others saw it as a good opportunity to reclaim a bit of biblical imagery and point people to its origins in the promise God makes us in Genesis 9. They knew that wearing a rainbow lanyard would be remarked upon by non-Christian colleagues and so provide an opportunity for them to share their hope in Jesus. Again, I encouraged them to think about saying something that would intrigue and get people wanting to find out more rather than delivering a full sermon download (always a tendency of the eager evangelist).

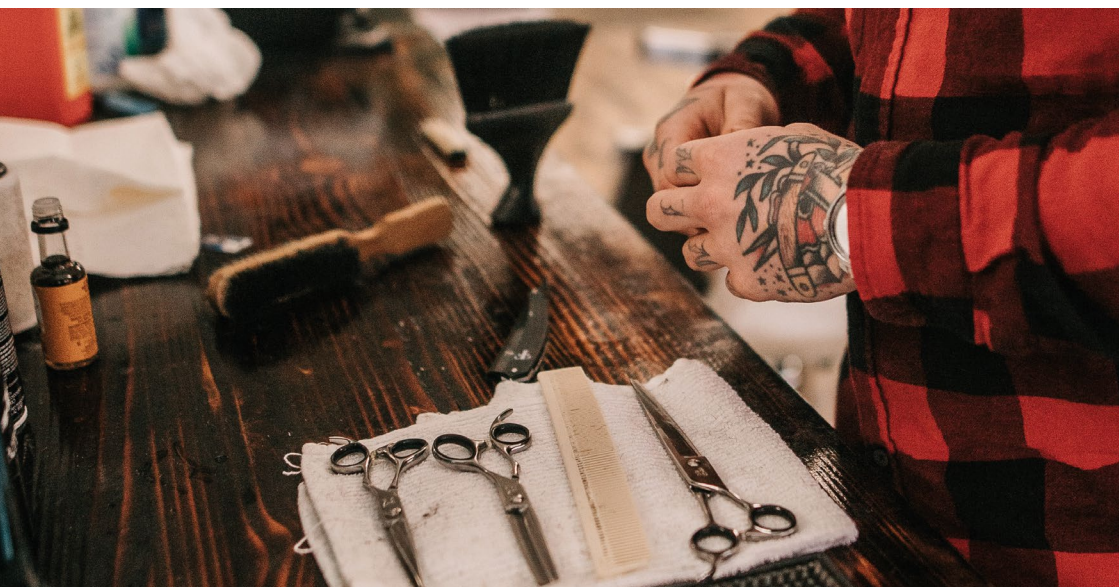
So, we were divided as a church family on the question 'to wear or not to wear?' But we remain united in our desire to speak and live in a way that points a watching world to Jesus. You can do the same whether you wear one or not.⁸

You might find you never have to have a conversation about what you do or don't do with regards to Pride month or related LGBTQ+ issues. If no one asks you about it, don't feel it is something you necessarily have to raise.

However, whether you choose to wear, or not wear Pride-endorsing symbols, colleagues may ask you why that is, and it helps to be prepared. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to be "prepared to give an answer" for our faith, and that includes how our faith impacts what we do. This isn't just an instruction to be prepared in attitude, but also in what words we will use. Think through carefully how you might answer questions related to this issue in a gentle and humble way.

If your boss directly asks you to wear something which endorses a view which conflicts with your Christian faith, it is possible to rely upon your employment rights, including your right not to suffer unlawful religion and belief discrimination. The law recognises that the mere expression of Christian beliefs about human sexuality and gender identity does not mean that you will discriminate against others on that basis.

Explain that you are a Christian and that your belief about human sexuality or gender identity is rooted in the Christian faith; hopefully your employer will be understanding of this. However, if they then treat you less favourably than your colleagues because of your beliefs (such as by subjecting you to disciplinary proceedings for not wearing a lanyard) or if they behave towards you in a way that is unwelcome and difficult (such as by pressurising you to wear a lanyard or by subsequently excluding you from conversations or social events) this may amount to unlawful discrimination or harassment. In these circumstances, you may wish to seek legal advice.



Email signatures

Another issue that some Christians are facing in the workplace is whether to include pronouns in your email signature.

While the use of pronouns in email signatures is usually done out of a desire to be inclusive of transgender people, some people with gender dysphoria may find the practice very unhelpful and upsetting, as it confronts them with gendered language and may make them feel pressured to 'out' themselves when they do not want to. In addition, if you include pronouns in your email signature, some recipients of your emails may assume that this means you accept all aspects of 'gender identity' ideology.

However, there are perfectly valid reasons why a Christian might be convicted to act either way. This is again an issue of wisdom and conscience for Christians and similar considerations to wearing a rainbow lanyard apply.

- If it doesn't come up, or isn't prescribed, do what you feel comfortable with.
- If you are asked about it, have an answer prepared.
- If you are asked to do it by your line manager but feel strongly that it's not something you can do as a Christian, be prepared with what your rights and freedoms are on this issue. The law specifically protects belief in biological sex as opposed to gender identity.

Personal pronouns

Finally, one of the most contentious issues can be which personal pronouns (he/she/they etc) to use with regards to a transgender person.

Naming is a hugely important act in the Bible and our culture continues to recognise the power of names. In the transgender community, names are an important part of identity. Many people have a different name they are known by, and a person can legally change their name for any number of reasons. Pronouns, however, have a much clearer association with gender and sex. There is also a growing recognition of the free speech implications of compelling someone to use a particular pronoun. Currently, there isn't clear case-law on the point, but compelling someone to use pronouns or other gendered language (as opposed to a name) which they do not agree with may amount to unlawful discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.

Christians will take different approaches to this. For some, the balance of grace and truth is struck by using the person's preferred name but not pronouns. For others, courtesy leads them to use the name and preferred pronoun of a transgender person. Finally, integrity means that some find any use of preferred names or pronouns leads to confusion and ultimately results in their participation in, and perpetuation of, something they don't agree with.

When considering whether to use a person's preferred name or personal pronoun, there are several issues worth reflecting on:

- **Conversational norms** – In many situations, it's easy to avoid using pronouns because, in conversation, we tend to use a person's name and then "you".
- **The law** – If you are in a public role, for example a teacher or doctor, you may be in breach of workplace policies or guilty of discrimination if you fail to address a person by their new name. Also, it is not illegal for any person to change their "known as" name at any time for any reason, as long as it is not their intention to defraud. A person can also change their name via Deed Poll, making their new name legal.
- **Relationship** – The context of your relationship and how well you know the individual will greatly impact your approach. Failing to use someone's preferred name will make further conversation difficult, if not impossible. This is important to weigh up as part of the desire to build gospel bridges in the workplace.

To read more about how Christians as individuals and gathered communities begin to understand and respond well to transgender individuals and the broader ideological movement, read the Evangelical Alliance's brief biblical and pastoral introduction: *Transformed*.⁹

Take time to think and pray over any conscience issue you encounter in the workplace and seek advice from other Christians in your life.



6. Support for Christians in the workplace

Many of the ways we have described living for Jesus in the workplace are challenging. We do not underestimate how difficult living for Jesus in some of these areas is or might be.

Jesus warns His followers that living for Him will be difficult, but the wonderful news is that God never calls us to live for Him in isolation. First and foremost, God gives Christians the Holy Spirit, to guide us and give us strength, and as a reminder that we are not alone, but that God is always at our side (John 14:25–27). God also calls Christians into a life of community, to surround ourselves with brothers and sisters in Christ who can help us and share the burden as we go about seeking to live for Jesus (Hebrews 10:25).

Workplace groups

“I invited colleagues to a Christianity Explored course. It was initially attended by a handful who soon dropped out, but it led to some in-depth conversations with one colleague. I have also had the chance to explain the gospel while sharing long car journeys. These conversations have developed naturally. My workplace actively encourages engagement in employee networks and is very happy for the networks to organise educational opportunities for anyone to attend. I also had the chance to explain more about the Christian faith during an internal broadcast organised by the company’s Pride network.”

– Chartered engineer

Christian workplace groups share either the same workplace, profession, industry sector, or geographical area and are being established all over the UK. Some are small with just a few Christians meeting and praying, while others are very large groups in national and international organisations, where they play a major role in policy development and its day-to-day activities. Some will seek to engage in activities which bring benefits to

the whole organisation, for example by running educational courses on Christianity (such as Alpha or Christianity Explored) or putting on carol or Easter services.

Bearing in mind our calling to be salt and light, it is helpful if these groups are known and approved by senior management, rather than meet secretly. Additionally, approved Christian workplace groups can usually use company communications.

Coming together with other Christians in the workplace develops a stronger voice for Jesus. You can invite colleagues to prayer meetings with a particular theme that is important in your workplace. You can study the Bible with workplace themes such as leadership and wellbeing and invite your colleagues to come. Holding Christian meetings that are relevant to the workplace starts to build a recognition of a Christian presence, that colleagues can engage with when they are ready. People can find it easier to come to an informal Christian meeting in their workplace rather than enter a church, and it can be the start of a journey into a church community.

If there isn't already a Christian group in your workplace, consider starting one. Transform Work UK (transformworkuk.org) can help you do this and has a database of groups that will enable you to connect with Christians in your organisation, profession, or industry sector, and provide many useful resources.

A Christians' workplace group at a global property company:

A Christian working at the CBRE Group reached out to Transform Work UK asking how to set up a Christian workplace group. They engaged with the HR department who offered to formally make them a network. This meant that they could be involved with the diversity and inclusion week that happens every year, which led to the group's growth.

They ran a meditation and reflection session where people could come to relax and listen to scripture being read out, which was really well received. Christians, non-Christians, and people from other faiths attended the sessions. HR asked them to do it again as part of mental health awareness week, acknowledging the positive impact it had on workers' wellbeing.

This group started with just three people praying together and is now operating in several different offices across the company.



Church life

In the Bible, Christians are called to live for Jesus in community, as part of the body of Christ. We need the help of other believers to keep us going, spurring us on “toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:24–25). The church is where Christian brothers and sisters can encourage one another to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and remind each other that He is “the author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

A great way to be encouraged to live for Jesus at work is to join a small group. This is a smaller community within the church where you can develop meaningful Christian relationships and share with each other the joys and challenges you face in your lives. This may be a mid-week Bible study group, a prayer triplet, a one-to-one mentor or accountability partnership, or another configuration depending on your church.

If there is an area of this resource that has particularly challenged you, or you would like to see change in your work life, or perhaps you are left feeling passionate about sharing the gospel with your colleagues, these groups would be an excellent place to request prayer for whatever the next step might be for you. This trusted group can pray for you and ask how things are developing. We all need people to challenge us when we are being half-hearted in our pursuit of living for Jesus, as well as to remind us of His never-ending grace, and encourage us when we fail to see our own growth.

Another great way some churches are supporting Christians in the workplace is by helping the church know what people do in their jobs, so that the church is equipped to support and pray for its members. This can look like someone sharing from the front on a Sunday what they will be doing on Monday morning. This also encourages the one sharing that their work is important in the eyes of God and His work in the world.

“I told a colleague, now a good friend, that I thought she was a ‘closet Christian’ because she is so kind to people. During lockdown, we were both shielding and able to work from home. I invited her to Zoom Alpha, which we did together, and she will be receiving baptism classes in the New Year at my local church – Amen!”

– Science lab technician

Conclusion

We hope and pray that this resource will serve you as you seek to live for Jesus at work. We truly believe that the UK workforce has an important role to play in bringing the good news of Jesus into a society that knows less and less about Him.

As we conducted research in the making of this resource, it was so encouraging to read all the different stories of the ways in which people had shared the good news of Jesus at work, some of which you will have seen throughout the resource. We hope they encouraged you too.

God is building a people for Himself, and He simply invites us to take part and be His tools. It is not on us to be impressive, or highly eloquent, because the Spirit of Jesus is at work through us, and all the glory goes to Him.

The work is happening; every day someone will put their faith in Jesus for the first time. The question is, do you want to be a part of it?



For further information and encouragement, please see our list of recommended reading and resources below.

Organisations

Transform Work UK
transformworkuk.org/

LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity)
licc.org.uk/about/work/

Group resources

Fruitfulness on the frontline licc.org.uk/ourresources/fruitfulness/

Transforming work licc.org.uk/ourresources/transformingwork/

Revive and rejuvenate, refreshing Christian workplace groups
transformworkuk.org/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=287909

Reframe reframecourse.com/

Conscience issues

People not pronouns livingout.org/resources/posts/46/people-not-pronouns

When we're accused of doing wrong
livingout.org/resources/posts/97/when-were-accused-of-doing-wrong

Transformed, understanding transgender in a changing culture
eauk.org/resources/what-we-offer/reports/transformed-understanding-transgender-in-a-changing-culture

Books

Every Good Endeavour
Timothy Keller

Proving Ground: 40 Reflections on Growing Faith at Work
Graham Hooper

Scattered and Gathered
Neil Hudson

City Lives
Marcus Nodder

Culture Making
Andy Crouch

The Seamless Life
Steven Garber

Every Job a Parable
John van Sloten

God at Work
Ken Costa

Revolutionary Work
William Taylor

Thank God it's Monday
Mark Greene

Working without Wilting
Jago Wynne

Created and Creating
William Edgar
(for a more in-depth and academic read)

To find out more about the Evangelical Alliance and Lawyers' Christian Fellowship:

Evangelical Alliance

eauk.org

Lawyers' Christian Fellowship

lawcf.org

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⁸ Ed Shaw, 'Should a Christian Wear a Rainbow Lanyard?', Living Out website, 18 August 2021. livingout.org/resources/posts/47/should-a-christian-wear-a-rainbow-lanyard

⁹ eauk.org/resources/what-we-offer/reports/transformed-understanding-transgender-in-a-changing-culture/transformed-the-resource





Evangelical Alliance

The Evangelical Alliance joins together hundreds of organisations, thousands of churches and tens of thousands of individuals to make Jesus known. Representing our members since 1846, the Evangelical Alliance is the oldest and largest evangelical unity movement in the UK. United in mission and voice, we exist to serve and strengthen the work of the church in our communities and throughout society. Highlighting the significant opportunities and challenges facing the church today, we are committed to sharing fresh ideas, celebrating best practice and catalysing innovation throughout the evangelical community and beyond.

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Lawyers' Christian Fellowship

Established in 1852 as a prayer union, and subsequently renamed the "Lawyers' Christian Fellowship" (the LCF), the LCF has a long history of uniting and equipping Christian lawyers. Today, the LCF has a growing membership of more than 1,500 Christian lawyers and law students, with a network of groups spanning Britain, and international links which are particularly strong in east Africa. As a fellowship and individually, LCF members support Christians and Christian organisations through the services they provide and resources they produce, including their popular Find-a-Lawyer service and the *Speak Up* resource produced in conjunction with the Evangelical Alliance. More information about the LCF is available on their website lawcf.org. Please contact the LCF if you would like to support the work that they do.

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“Concerned about how to live out your Christian faith at work in an authentic way? Then this is the guide for you! Full of practical advice and resources to help all of us address today’s workplace challenges wisely, responsibly and effectively.”

– **Fiona Bruce MP, prime minister’s special envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief**

“The majority of Christians that we’ve met don’t really believe that their work on their daily frontlines is significant to God. This new resource serves as a welcome reminder that it is, and navigates us through some of the challenges and opportunities we face in our working lives.”

– **Paul Woolley, CEO of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC)**

“For those of us in full time work, we spend 25% or more of our available time in the workplace. We spend more time at work than we do with church family, neighbours or friends, so living for Jesus at work is so important in us being obedient to Jesus. This is an excellent resource to help you to think about how you can be a more effective witness for Jesus in your workplace. We don’t do it alone, and I pray that along with the Holy Spirit this booklet will help to equip and empower you to shine for Jesus in your workplace.”

– **Marie Reavey, national chair of the Christian Police Association**

“Speaking up for Jesus at work can be awkward, and it can have risks, but the great news is that those risks are often smaller than we think, and the protections are significant. This excellent resource shows how we can learn to bring our whole selves to work as Christians – acting wisely and sensitively, we can be confident there is room for Christian lives and Christian views in our workplaces and there is help and protection if things get difficult. What are you waiting for!”

– **Dr Mark Pickering, chief executive of the Christian Medical Fellowship**



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