



**Relationships
Matter**

Affirmations

**Evangelical affirmations
on the Bible, sexuality and
same-sex attraction**



The following affirmations summarise the position of the Evangelical Alliance in relation to same-sex attraction and should be read alongside *Relationships Matter: Affirmations Guide*. This guide as well as other resources on relationships, identity and sexuality are available at eauk.org/sexuality.

Evangelicals believe that living in line with the Bible has a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities and that an orthodox sexual ethic furthers human flourishing. These affirmations set the discussion of same-sex sexuality within the context of the gospel of grace and Christian teaching on love, marriage, and sex more generally. They supersede previous versions updating the language to be more accessible and bringing clarity concerning our beliefs and their theological foundations.

Recent political commitments and public campaigns relating to conversion therapy have elevated the debate on how to care for and support people who experience same-sex attraction. The Evangelical Alliance has consistently supported action to end abusive and coercive conversion therapy practices while ensuring people can receive the prayer and spiritual support they choose. These affirmations reiterate this position and should be read and understood in that light.

We are conscious that different evangelicals might apply some of these points in different ways, but we believe that, taken together, they reflect an authentic, biblical, mainstream evangelical approach to same-sex attraction.

The 10 affirmations

1

We affirm the goodness of creation, and the dignity of all people as those made in God's image. We recognise that all of us are sinners, and that the only true hope for sinful people – whatever our sexuality – is in Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that His love, truth and grace would always characterise evangelical responses to debates on sexuality.

2

We affirm God's love and concern for all human beings, whatever their sexuality, and so reject and condemn all attitudes and actions which victimise or vilify those whose affections are directed towards people of the same sex. We are encouraged that many Christians now recognise and deeply regret the hurt caused by past and present failures in their responses to those who experience same-sex attraction.

We affirm that marriage is an institution created by God in which one man and one woman enter into an exclusive relationship for life, and is the only form of partnership approved by God for sexual relations. Holding these theological and ethical views on biblical grounds is in itself neither harmful nor homophobic. Rather, they are views to be held and expressed with Christ-like love and grace, since they reflect the teaching of Jesus Himself.

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We encourage evangelical congregations to be communities of grace in which those who experience same-sex attraction and seek to live faithfully in accordance with biblical teaching are welcomed and affirmed. Such Christians need churches which are healthy communities where they are able to share and explore their stories with fellow believers for mutual encouragement and support as we help each other grow together into maturity in Christ.

We believe that the acceptance by certain churches of same-sex marriage and other forms of sexual relationships outside monogamous heterosexual marriage, and permitting the ordination to ministry of those in such relationships, is incompatible with biblical teaching. We stand prayerfully with those in such churches who are seeking to resist these moves on biblical grounds.

5

We believe church services that institute or bless same-sex marriages, same-sex civil partnerships and any other forms of sexual relationship outside monogamous heterosexual marriage are unbiblical. We believe that no church leader or congregation should be compelled to perform or participate in such services.

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We commend and encourage all those who experience same-sex attraction and have committed themselves to chastity by refraining from same-sex sexual practice. We believe they should be eligible for ordination and leadership within the church, recognising that they can bring invaluable insights and experience to the sphere of Christian pastoral ministry.

We affirm the work of those helping Christians who experience same-sex attraction and who want to live in accordance with biblical teaching. Such pastoral support may involve prayer and counselling and must be done in a responsible, consensual, and non-coercive way. We acknowledge that some people have experienced changes in their sexual attractions, with or without such support, though this outcome is not necessary for Christian faithfulness and should not be promised.

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We believe that sexual relations outside marriage without repentance, and public promotion of such activity, are inconsistent with faithful church membership. While processes of membership and discipline differ from one church context to another, we affirm that churches should be free to follow these processes in relation to those who engage in, or promote, sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage.

We encourage evangelical congregations to love and welcome all people, whatever their pattern of sexual behaviour. We are called to be communities of gentleness, patience and ongoing pastoral care in which all of us who are living outside God's purposes, will come in due course to see the need to be transformed and live in accordance with biblical revelation and orthodox church teaching.

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