



The Sharing of Church Buildings and Ecumenical Hospitality

Relationships as Tenant, Guest or Sharers?

There has been an explosion in the diversity of Christian churches and congregations in the UK over the last twenty years. One result of this is a new opportunity for long-established churches to offer hospitality to other congregations who might be seeking a place to hold their worship.

However, this need to be done with care and sensitivity. The Group for Local Unity, within Churches Together in England, suggests that there are three categories - Tenant, Guest and Sharer - which describe the sort of relationship that might exist between the two congregation using the same building. The need for a clear awareness of cultural differences and traditions is absolutely crucial.

- The Tenant - Landlord relationship, a purely practical agreement limited to matters of use and finance. The two congregations remain essentially separate.
- The Host - Guest relationship, suggesting a more generous hospitality in which the host congregation has a sense of care and responsibility toward the guest congregation - a regard for the guests as fellow Christians. The risk here might be a patronising attitude from host towards guest.
- Being Sharers suggests that a mutual partnership is developing between equals. If the two congregations are worshipping separately but committed to a continuing partnership, the idea of a Covenant between them might at some stage become an appropriate way of strengthening the relationship.

There is a wealth of downloadable material on [the Sharing of Church Buildings](#) from Churches Together in England.

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