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Author

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## Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

At the age of twelve I became a Christian: I looked to Jesus as my Saviour and my Lord. Not long after that, like most human beings, I started developing romantic attractions. This wasn't something that I chose, but I found these to be for other men rather than for women. Thirty years on that hasn't changed. One of the big questions in my life then has been this: how do I live with Jesus as Lord when experiencing attraction to the same sex?

Given the number of people attracted to those of the same sex (around 2-3% of the population probably) this will be a question for many in our churches. For others, it may be the issue that stops them embracing the Gospel. In Britain, more and more churches are teaching that same-sex marriage is possible and telling people in my position to embrace a romantic relationship. On the other hand, in more conservative churches, it may be hard for those who experience same-sex attraction to find a safe place to talk about their challenges.

Living Out started in Britain in 2013. It was set up by a group of Christian leaders who experience same-sex attraction. Nevertheless, we believe that Jesus taught that marriage is to be heterosexual (Matthew 19:4-6) because of God's plan at creation and because the union of a husband and wife is intended to be a beautiful picture of the eternal marriage between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). We want to urge individual Christians and the church to hold to Jesus' teaching on sexuality. Alongside that, we long for churches to be places where those who experience same-sex attraction can flourish. This involves the provision of good pastoral support and valuing singleness and marriage as equally good callings for the Christian. Also, to be an authentic church family where those who choose not to have romantic relationships because of their loyalty to Jesus have a network of emotionally satisfying friendships.

Our website is the main way in which we achieve these aims. We have a range of video testimonies, articles and a weekly blog that tell our stories and seek to answer various questions. Our podcast allows churches to listen to our experience as we discuss fighting temptation, making the most of singleness, deepening friendships and other issues. We provide training for churches around the UK (and occasionally beyond) on the Bible's big picture of marriage, responding to culture and helping same-sex attracted Christians to flourish. We work alongside our friends at True Freedom Trust, who provide pastoral support to individual Christians and their families in this area. We are discouraged and encouraged. Seeing churches depart from the teaching of Jesus is painful and makes it harder to persevere. However, we are thrilled to see other churches holding to the truth and discussing how they can be better homes for those who are single or wrestling with issues of sexuality.



### We would very much welcome your prayers for the Living Out team in three particular areas:

1. The younger generation faces the most intense pressure through teaching at schools and universities to depart from biblical teaching on sexuality. We have recently set up a network to provide resources for youth leaders, which we hope will be useful.
2. We are being invited to speak to a number of churches who are discussing whether to approve of same-sex marriage. Please pray that we would be faithful and gracious and know the best use of our limited time.
3. Please pray for us and all believers across Europe who experience same-sex attraction that we might be faithful to Christ and enjoy being part of church families as we look forward to the final wedding of Jesus and the church.



### Update:-

Following the article on Israel in the last issue of Canopy, we have heard that a special time of fasting and prayer for Israel has been called by the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, which is due to take place over 21 days, starting on 7th May and culminating on 28th May, Pentecost Sunday. Other global prayer networks are also planning prayer for Israel on 28th May, with the hope that up to 100 million intercessors will be joining forces on that day. Let's join in! For more details go to the IHOP website:-

<https://www.ihopkc.org/isaiah62fast/>

### Additional Prayer Points:-

1. Pray that peace can be restored to Paris and other French cities as strikes and protests over a rise in the age for receiving a pension affect many areas of life, e.g. transport and rubbish collection.
2. Pray for those Ukrainian children who have been forcibly removed from their country and taken to Russia to be "re-educated" to make them Russian.

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