

GENERAL SYNOD 2018

Liturgical Advisory Committee Resolution: Holy Communion by Extension Proposer: The Rt Revd Harold Miller

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

The Order for Holy Communion by Extension is for the use primarily of those who are sick. This Order has already been used for many years, under the legislation which allows the House of Bishops to grant permission for experimental use, and so has been road-tested in different parts of our Church. As I introduce this resolution, it is important, first of all, to emphasise what the service actually is. It is a liturgy which makes possible the inclusion of someone who is ill or unable to attend the Eucharist, to participate in the celebration of the community. The way in which it works is this. At the main communion service, bread and wine is set aside for those who are unable to be present. At the end of the service the people concerned may be prayed for, and ministers (lay or ordained) with suitable training and authorization, are sent out with the elements to those who are sick. This happens in immediate continuity with the service. The person bringing the elements will read the Scriptures, perhaps even share a thought from the sermon, pray with the person concerned, and administer the bread and wine to them. They will hear these words, connecting them with the wider assembly of God's people: 'The Church of God, of which we are members, has taken bread and wine and given thanks over them, according to our Lord's command. I now bring you these holy gifts that you might share in the communion of his body and blood.'

What a wonderful way to minister to the sick, what a wonderful privilege for those who link them with the community of God's people and bring the elements to them. But briefly, what it is not. It is not some kind of underhand way to introduce reservation of the blessed sacrament, and the rubric at the end of the liturgy makes it clear that the remaining bread and wine are to be consumed. One of the reasons people often give for wanting more ordained clergy, not least locally, is so that they can 'do communion'! What they often don't realize is that extended communion can be done even more appropriately by lay people who with love, grace, time and care connect others in when they have to be on their own, away from the community of faith. What a privilege. I commend this service to you.