

Lord's Prayer opening may be 'problematic', says archbishop

Archbishop of York tells General Synod that 'Our Father' has patriarchal connotations

The archbishop of York has suggested that opening words of the Lord's Prayer, recited by Christians all over the world for 2,000 years, may be "problematic" because of their patriarchal association.

In his opening address to a meeting of the Church of England's ruling body, the General Synod, Stephen Cottrell dwelt on the words "Our Father", the start of the prayer based on Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 in the New Testament.

"I know the word 'father' is problematic for those whose experience of earthly fathers has been destructive and abusive, and for all of us who have laboured rather too much from an oppressively patriarchal grip on life," he said.

His comment - a brief aside in a speech that focused on the need for unity - will divide members of the C of E, a body whose differences on issues of sexuality, identity and equality have been highly visible for years.

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