



DRUGS POLICY

LAST UPDATED JUNE 2012

THE NATIONAL SITUATION

Within the UK 2.8 million people may be regarded as alcohol dependant and 33,000 die every year from alcohol related harm. (120,000 die each year from tobacco related causes). Millions of people suffer from adverse health, criminal activities, accidental injury or violence resulting from consumption of these substances. Illegal substances also lead to health harm, criminal activity and nearly 3,000 deaths each year.

All of us are affected by the use of both legal and illegal drugs. As well as adverse personal experience, our society has to pay for the police, judicial, health and welfare services needed to address these issues.

It is vital that as Christians we should help those who are hurting and work to prevent harm before it occurs.

OUR CHURCH

NARCOTICS: Illegal substances are not allowed on the premises.

TOBACCO: The use of tobacco is prohibited inside the building.

ALCOHOL: Within our church there are those who adopt an alcohol free lifestyle and those who drink in moderation. We acknowledge this difference and accept that on a personal level this must remain an issue of individual choice. However, there are steps that we can take to ensure that the church is informed on the subject and positive action is taken where necessary.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

There is no direct Biblical teaching about tobacco or any other drug except alcohol. The Bible is clear that drunkenness is to be avoided but leaves no definite indication about the moderate use of alcohol. It is likely that the Jewish culture and relatively weak wines of Bible times resulted in a low

level of alcohol related harm, particularly when compared to the situation today.

General principles that apply to all drug use, legal or illegal, include:

- The need to care for Creation and acknowledge that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.
- The need for clarity of mind (1 Peter 4:7)
- The need to care for others, including by example.
- Helping those who are hurting.
- Obeying the law of the land
- Being in the world but not of it.

PRACTICAL ACTION

OUR PREMISES: Alcoholic drinks are allowed at events on our premises; however the organisers of such events must carefully consider the situation, age and attitudes of people present and take the appropriate action. We have also opted to continue to use traditional alcoholic wine mixed with water for communion.

EVENTS OUTSIDE CHURCH PREMISES: In order to be consistent we will ensure that care is taken to ensure that events outside the premises maintain this corporate concern. For example, no one should drive with an excess of alcohol in their bloodstream. And where 'church events' are held in people's homes they should consider carefully the situations, ages and attitudes of those present and take appropriate action.

Leaders and other adults taking responsibility for youth and children's events will be asked to treat them as if they were on the premises i.e. No use of alcohol, tobacco or any other substance. Where residential activities are concerned it will be for the leaders to decide how to deal with a young person who may be dependent on tobacco.

EDUCATION: Drug issues affect all parts of society so we will encourage all organisations to include the subject in their programme.

Appropriate resources will also be made available to the church community.

COMMUNITY: We will be aware of drug issues that arise in the community.

COUNSELLING: We seek to help those who suffer from the abuse of alcohol or other drugs, supporting them or referring them to other appropriate organisations.

We will try and ensure that, should a drug or alcohol related situation arise, there will be someone available to deal with it and that a list of useful phone numbers will be kept in the office. Where appropriate, we will offer prayer.

YOUNG PEOPLE: Young people are at particular risk of first experimenting and regularly using various substances.

We will ensure that those who work with young people have the knowledge to provide both information and support.

We will ensure that there are common procedures to be followed if illegal drugs are found or used on the premises or used at or near a youth event.

If a young person comes to an event under the influence of any substance then they will be asked to leave the premises and if we have their details their parents will be informed of this decision. Young people will not be permitted on the premises if they turn up to an event with clear signs of substance misuse.

Our Child Protection policy will be applied as appropriate where, for example, a young person needs counselling.

Those working with young people have an added responsibility to present a positive example to the young people in their care—in their actions, words and attitudes.