

ABSTRACT

Pastoral Care through the Church of Ireland's *Book of Common Prayer*

by

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The thesis of this dissertation is that the Church of Ireland's *Book of Common Prayer* contains many opportunities for worshippers to realise the benefits of pastoral care through liturgy. Due to the constraints of a master's level dissertation, the scope of this project is necessarily limited to the services most often conducted on Sundays throughout the Church of Ireland: Holy Communion, Service of the Word, Morning/Evening Prayer, and Holy Baptism; also discussed are some other important seasonal variations and special-occasion services of the Church calendar.

The mode of investigation of the dissertation includes first reviewing the academic literature regarding the theoretical, theological, and scriptural background necessary to undertake the later analytical work on the Prayer Book liturgies. The first chapter in this section will examine the subject of pastoral care, looking at a definition of pastoral care, and demonstrating the scriptural imperative for pastoral care in the Old and New Testaments. A set of key pastoral care activities will be derived from the literature that will be used to examine the Prayer Book liturgies.

The second main section of the dissertation contains the major analytical work of this project in evaluating opportunities for worshippers to realise the benefits of pastoral care through corporate worship in the above-listed services. The celebration of Holy Communion offers special opportunities for being reminded of the love of God and the concern and care of the Body of Christ.

The third section is a distillation of interviews conducted by the student researcher with fourteen lay and ordained worship leaders on the topic of pastoral care through liturgy. Those interviewed included mostly priests in the dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, but also encompassed senior clergy from the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, and the bishop of Down and Dromore.