

# PASTOR'S PATCH



## **WARNING: THIS CONTAINS AN EMOTIVE DISCUSSION OF DEATH**

Maybe you have sat by the bed of someone you love as they face terminal or life-limiting illness. Perhaps it has been a family member with Alzheimer's Disease or a similar diagnosis of dementia. Maybe, like me, you have found yourself torn between wanting them to die with dignity, but almost wondering if it would be better if they somehow died more swiftly.

The Ten Commandments contain the command to not kill another human being (Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17), and the Bible also includes an injunction to refrain from killing the innocent (Exodus 23:7): these pose challenges to any Christian ethical position that affirms positive action to end the life of another human being, including engaging in war or self-defence, or action by a medical practitioner to end the life of a suffering patient without consent.

But Parliament turn this theoretical discussion to a real one before Christmas when they will debate and vote upon the "Assisted Dying Bill". The Evangelical Alliance have called for Christians to oppose this on the grounds of protecting 'the inherent dignity of every human being'. But others like the group "Religious Alliance of Dignity in Dying" point to research from 2019 that 80% of people with faith supported the legalisation of assisted dying for terminally ill adults with mental capacity, whether they would want the choice for themselves or not.

I have my personal views on this matter, and would be happy to hear yours and share mine with anyone. In our congregation there may be a variety of opinion, influenced not only by our understanding of the Bible, but also probably of our lived experience.

But either way I urge us all to have these conversations with those around us, to contact our local MP so that they may know our opinions and most of all to pray for those who will soon debate and vote upon this Bill for the nation. See also <https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/assisted-dying>