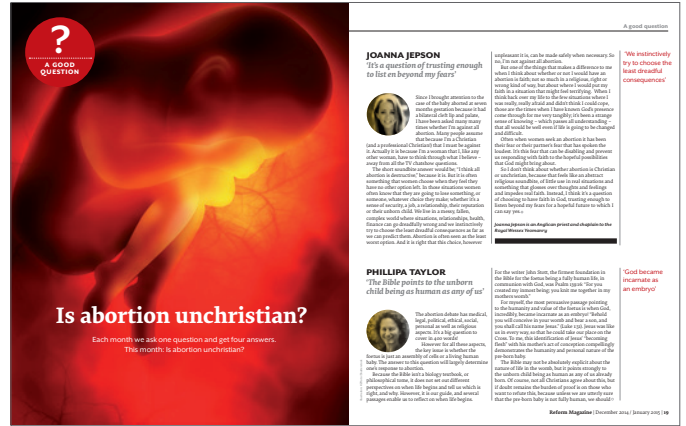


Small group discussion questions December 2014/January 2015

A good question: Is abortion unchristian?

Joanna Jepson, Philippa Taylor, Tina Beattie, Linda Woodhead (p18-21)

1. Joanna Jepson says, in her second paragraph: “I think all abortion is destructive”. In what ways might it be destructive?
2. Despite this, she says, in the same paragraph: “I’m not against all abortion”. What reasons does she give for sometimes supporting something destructive? Do you agree with her reasons?
3. In paragraphs three to five, Joanna describes a battle between fear and faith. What difference does faith make to a decision such as abortion? In what other areas of life do we experience the same battle?
4. Philippa Taylor says, in her second paragraph, that the question that determines our attitude to abortion is “whether the foetus is just an assembly of cells or a living human baby”. Do you agree that this is the essential question? If you do, what is your answer to it? If you disagree, what is the essential question?
5. In paragraph three, Philippa quotes Psalm 139. What difference does this passage make to your feelings and opinions about abortion?
6. In paragraph four, Philippa talks about the incarnation of Jesus as an embryo. What difference does this make to the question of whether or not abortion is unchristian?
7. In her last paragraph, Philippa says: “Opposing abortion should not mean we lack compassion”. What are the dangers to all sides in this debate of lacking compassion? How can we avoid those dangers?



8. Tina Beattie says in her first paragraph: “I don’t think any single act can be judged as Christian or unchristian – we have to understand the context and intentions.” Do you agree with this? What difference do the context and intentions make?

9. In paragraph two, Tina says: “The vast majority of abortions in Britain today are lifestyle choices”. What do you think she means by this, and do you agree?

10. In paragraph three and four, Tina argues that there is a crucial moral difference between abortions in late and early pregnancy. What is the difference? How important do you think that difference is?

11. In her last paragraph, Tina argues that Christianity is less about moral absolutes than it is about “forgiveness, healing and compassion”. Do you agree with this? Do you think that the Church is good at those three things?

12. Linda Woodhouse, in her first paragraph, says that Christians do not oppose abortion in much greater numbers than the rest of the population, but clergy oppose it more than other Christians. Do you find those statistics surprising, or do they match your expectations?

13. In paragraphs two to four, Linda argues that the question that determines our view of abortion is whether we accept the “bare life” or “full life” view. What is the difference? Do you agree that this is the crucial question? Which view do you think is right?

14. Which of the four contributors do you think comes closest to the truth about our question on abortion?

For further reflection: “In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being... With God are wisdom and strength; he has counsel and understanding.”
Job 12:10, 13

Prayer: Dear God, in the hard times that we all face, let us know the faith which overcomes fear. Give us the wisdom and strength to bear with one another and uphold one another. May we be people who help the vulnerable, whatever their age, as you help us in our own need. Amen.