

# **Gender, Leadership and Ministry: Will Women ever be Bishops in the Church of England**

**Elizabeth Fisher**

**May 2006**

The Church of England has developed the ministry of women for the past two hundred years. It has moved from training teachers to training women for ordained ministry. Today the Church is discussing the introduction of women into the Episcopate. This debate is an important one for many women who have found themselves called to a ministry that is more than just a parish vicar or a team leader. The position of Bishop is a privileged one for the men who take the job. The purpose of this dissertation is to discuss whether women should be allowed to hold office alongside men, drawing the conclusions from modern history and the current ecumenical position.

There are few resources around that track this change and develop the argument surrounding the issue of female bishops. This dissertation gives some idea of what has happened over the years and how women have developed their own ministry within the Church of England. It takes a look at the last fourteen years since women were ordained as priests. It draws upon a qualitative questionnaire, where the answers are very personal in their account of women's ministry. It comes to a conclusion, taking in everything that has been said and answers the question: Will women ever be Bishops in the Church of England?