



Air Travel & Creation Care - Guidance for Thoughtful Decision Making

Introduction

As a Diocese, we are committed to safeguarding God's creation and responding faithfully to the climate crisis. Air travel is among the most carbon-intensive activities we can engage in, with emissions from a single long-haul flight exceeding the annual footprint of many individuals worldwide. In line with our [Diocesan Environment Policy](#), we aim to encourage sustainable transport choices wherever possible.

While reducing air travel can be challenging, we encourage all journey decisions to be considered and weighed up in line with their environmental impact. This guidance is intended to support thoughtful, informed decisions about flying that align with our calling to care for creation.

Key Considerations Before Choosing to Fly

High Carbon Impact

Aviation emissions are significant, and immediate. For example, a return flight from London to New York emits around 2.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide^[1] – the equivalent amount that it would take at least 114 mature trees to absorb in a year^[2].

Climate Justice

As Christians, we are called to live responsibly and faithfully care for what God has entrusted to us. This includes reducing harm to the earth, and our global and local neighbours. There is a justice issue with flying: 70% of all flights are taken by just 15% of people^[3], mostly from wealthier countries. Aviation also produces harmful pollutants and noise, impacting the health and wellbeing of communities living near airports.

^[1] [Climate Stewards – For people and planet](#)

^[2] [How Much CO2 Does A Tree Absorb? – One Tree Planted](#)

^[3] [Elite status: Global inequalities in flying – Possible](#)

Journey Necessity

Questions to consider before booking a flight:

- Could the meeting be held online?
- Could someone closer to the destination undertake the task?
- Could lower-carbon alternatives such as rail travel be used?

When Flying is Necessary

Aim to Combine Trips

If possible, planning to visit multiple people or locations in one trip and staying longer can reduce the need for repeat visits.

Fly Direct

As takeoffs and landings use the most fuel, aim to choose direct flights where possible, which have a lower carbon impact.

Offsetting

Offsetting does not erase emissions and should not replace efforts to reduce them. Many schemes offer to offset through tree planting, which provides delayed carbon benefits as trees take decades to mature, while flight emissions occur instantly. Because the climate crisis requires urgent reduction of our carbon emissions, offsetting cannot be treated as a meaningful alternative to reducing emissions.

However, offsetting can still offer some benefit compared to flying without any mitigation. If you choose to offset, A Rocha's [Climate Stewards](#) is a trusted provider. They also provide a carbon calculator tool to help you measure your travel-related carbon impact.

It is important to remember that offsetting is not a license to fly freely – reducing emissions remains the priority.

Further Information and Links

[Elite status: Global inequalities in flying — Possible](#)

[Climate Stewards – For people and planet](#)

[Holiday Local 'How - to' Guide — Take the Jump](#)



The Diocese of
Southwark