

“In Anglicanism, and in the Episcopal Church, the cornerstones of our faith and sources of authority are scripture, tradition and reason. The balance between each of these three sources is often characterized as a three-legged stool – a concept attributed to Anglican theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600).

A stool with three legs will collapse if any one of the legs is not equal with the others. And so it is with the balance between scripture, tradition and reason in church doctrine. Because they are held as **equal in authority, each of these sources needs to be interpreted in context with the other two.**”

Source: <https://www.dsoconnections.org/2017/08/28/scripture-tradition-and-reason-a-three-legged-stool/>

We rely on a balance of Scripture, Tradition and Reason to explain life's mysteries

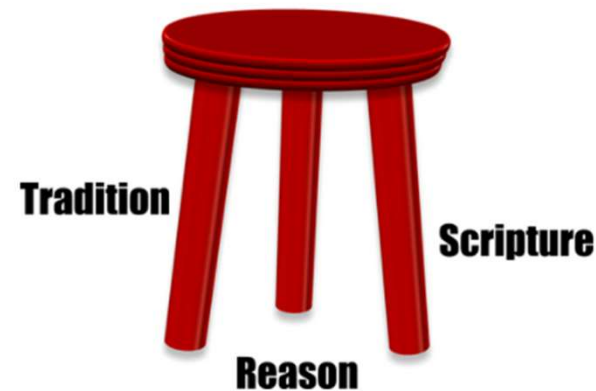
Episcopalians value Scripture, Tradition and Reason **equally**. We often use the metaphor of a three-legged stool, with each leg of the stool contributing equally to our balanced approach.

The Anglican approach to reading and interpreting the Bible is unique compared to many other denominations. While we, like all Christians, acknowledge the Bible (or the Holy Scripture) as the Word of God and completely sufficient to our reconciliation to God, we strongly believe that the Bible should be considered in the context of our own time and place.

Christianity has amassed two thousand years of experiencing God, of reading scripture, and of following Jesus. What these wise and loving people have said to us through the centuries is critical to our understanding and our behavior. The traditions of the Church connect all generations and give us guidance to continue the dialogue.

The sixteenth century Anglican theologian Richard Hooker first proposed this model of understanding the bible. It strikes a balance between the Puritan doctrine that the bible needs no interpretation at all—we believe that a doctrine of biblical inerrancy can be a hindrance to spiritual growth, and rarely a help—and an over-reliance on tradition—some churches are so steeped in ritual and order that it's difficult to understand the underlying message of Christ.

Episcopalians believe that every Christian must build an understanding and relationship with God, and to do that, God has given us intelligence and our own experience, which we refer to as "Reason." Based on the text of the Bible itself, and what Christians have taught us about it through the ages, we then must sort out our own understanding of it as it relates to our own lives.



Source: Saint Paul's Episcopal Church of Bellingham Washington
<https://www.stpaulsbellingham.org/about-the-episcopal-church/2013/11/2/scripture-tradition-reason.html>



Richard Hooker

1554-1600

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE THREE-LEGGED STOOL?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE THREE-LEGGED STOOL?

Is Tradition a Valid Source?

No because:

- Traditions/churches have been wrong
- Traditions can't be authoritative or bound



Is Reason a Valid Source?

No because:

- We aren't equipped to make our own way
- Others weren't capable
 - Eve
 - Naaman
 - Uzzah
 - Abraham
 - Moses
 - Paul