

My Story

I come from a Baptist family. My father is a minister at our local church, and is one of a few in our family. I have been the organist in the church for quite some time now.

Last year, I felt it was time to 'come out' to my family (I am the eldest of two sons). Things went far better than I thought, at first. Yes, there was the furrowed brow and the wringing of hands. Mum was down for a few days, and dad kind of avoided me, but after a while, when they saw that it was affecting me, they seemed to come round. It wasn't an open armed change of thought, just a less-preachy approach to my news.

Around the same time, I had started seeing someone. Things got worse when I decided to be open about this to my parents. Shortly after this, I was asked to leave the church, as it was felt there couldn't be any way of reconciling my sexuality (the perversion that it is) with my place in the House of God.

This devastated me. Music is something that I have a very deep interest in, having played the organ and piano for several years, and gave lessons to local children. So every Sunday, when my family prepared for church, I was left to sit at home. Luckily, I had a boyfriend (I'll call him Ben) who loved and supported me through this.

Time passed. My parents seemed to come round to the idea, my mum especially. She met Ben a few times, though the whole gay thing was still kind of baffling to her. Ben was welcome at my home, though only my mum speaks to him.

Recently however, my parents seem to have retreated back to their safe space of being homophobic. It is homophobia, though not in a malicious way. It just doesn't get talked about, Ben's name isn't mentioned, and when it is, it's kind of said with a hush or received with a 'oh, him' type attitude. Maybe I am overreacting and should just confront them, but I'm the only son living in the family home. Before it was ignorance, but they have had a year to deal with it. Are they just being homophobic now, or is it still ignorance? Is it my responsibility to educate them, or shouldn't they be doing that for themselves. It's a lot of pressure for me to take on in the middle of college and work. And it is depressing. It affects my self-esteem, and it's affecting my relationship.

Ben is frustrated by the whole thing. He understands their position and respects it. He even tries to empathise with them, but feels it is all one-sided. He really does try, but it's not easy for him either. We have had a

few small arguments about it. He doesn't want to pressure me to confront them, but sometimes he has said he feels I'm happy with the status quo and won't do it for that reason. He knows it's not easy for me, and is supportive and loving and caring, but we both know if he was a she, this would not even be an issue. Am I too afraid of what would happen if I confront my parents? Quite simply, yes I am. Do I want to lose Ben? No I don't. Am I happy with the status quo? I don't even know where to begin to answer that.

My father, the minister, has yet to even say hello to Ben, although he has met him a few times. Ben doesn't feel that he is welcome anymore in the house, and doesn't visit very often. He will if I ask him, but he will only come if I assure him the house is empty. He feels silly about it, but this affects him as much as it does me. I love him, and our relationship means a lot to us both. I don't want that ruined because of my family. But I just don't know if I have the strength to satisfy both sides. I'm still waiting for the family dinner invitation though I don't think that will happen any time soon. Contrastingly enough, Ben's family are quite the opposite, in every respect. I'm kind of jealous in a very small way. I know my family love me and want what is best. But perhaps they confuse what is best for me with what is best for them.

Despite the negativity of what is happening I know I have a family and a boyfriend who all love me, and a God who loves me for who I am. I'm still at the church now, playing the organ where I belong. After all, it is God's House, not my father's.