

Fairtrade Church worship materials

Prayers for Fairtrade Fortnight 2015



Dear Lord, we ask your blessing on all who are involved with Fairtrade, lifting before you:

- producers as they grow their crops and craft their works. Bless them, we pray, in their endeavours and grant them wisdom and discernment as they make decisions about how to use the benefits of Fairtrade.
- people who transport Fairtrade goods to market. Grant, we pray, that they, too, may be fairly treated.
- those who import and retail Fairtrade goods. Grant them, we pray, a genuine commitment to fairer trade for all.
- all of us who shop where Fairtrade goods are for sale. Grant us an understanding of the impact of our choices.

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Lord,
You call us to a neighbourly love
That is generous in practical ways,
That doesn't leave by the roadside
Those harmed by sin and greed
But goes out of its way
To bring healing.

Help us to see
How neighbours near and far
Are suffering, their resources stolen
By unjust people and systems.
And fill us, we pray, with your Spirit,
That we may be inspired
To go further each day in using our gifts
Of time and money and talent
Lovingly
In ways that redress injustice
And renew life for all.
Amen.

O Lord,
You revealed your Kingdom in parables
That spoke of simple things –
Yeast in a loaf of bread,
A woman sweeping her home.

Grant that the simple choices we make –
What tea to drink, what fruit to eat –
May honour your Name
And reveal your Kingdom present among
us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen

Lord God,
In the fields of the poor
Even when abundant fruits ripen,
Injustice sweeps them away,
And families hunger.

Help us to share
The fruits of your bounty
So that all your family may benefit
From your gracious gifts.
Amen.

With thanks to Christian Concern for One World (CCOW) and Elizabeth Perry for these prayers and reflections



Lectionary readings and reflections

Sunday 1 March 2015 (first Sunday of Fairtrade Fortnight)

- Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16: God promises the seemingly impossible to Abraham
- Psalm 22:23-end: Praise for the Lord who hears the cry of the poor
- Romans 4:13-end: Abraham's faith: 'Hoping against hope, he believed...' (v18)
- Mark 8:31-end: Jesus' way will challenge established powers. Following Jesus requires tough choices but is the way to life.

'Faith is trusting in spite of the evidence and then watching the evidence change,' writes Jim Wallis ('Faith Works - Lessons on Spirituality and Social Action' SPCK).

Reversal of expectation, commitment, choice and the fact that faith and action go together are themes running through these readings. Following Jesus is costly, yet in God's curious economy giving is receiving and blessing comes in the most unlikely circumstances.

The Fairtrade story echoes these truths: an alternative trading system which blesses both producer and consumer and challenges the *status quo*. It has grown dramatically from the seed of an idea, a hope, to become an established, major reality – a growth achieved by individuals believing, making choices and taking action.

Sunday 8 March 2015 (second Sunday of Fairtrade Fortnight)

- Exodus 20:1-17: The Ten Commandments
- Psalm 19 or 19:7-end: The law is meant to bless
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: Christ turns everything upside down. God chooses ordinary people to change the world
- John 2:13-22: Jesus drives out the money changers who desecrate what is holy in exploitative control of the market and pursuit of profit.

The commandments would be a source of blessing today if their call to respect life and personhood were taken seriously. Instead, economic dogma is pursued regardless of the consequences to poor people. Unfair trade rules rob people of both dignity and livelihood and the earth is exploited and worked to exhaustion. But there is an alternative.

Fairtrade restores dignity and respects both people and the environment; the campaign for trade justice aims to enshrine these principles in new trade rules. Anger is not often seen as a virtue, but it can signal that something is wrong and act as a spur to corrective action. In God's upside down kingdom it is ordinary people who are the movers and shakers – our choices and our actions can change the world.

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