



## Weekly Prayer Focus: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Modern Slavery

This week we take a break from our usual focus upon a local church, to look at a wider issue facing our Association with help from the EBA Justice Transformation Group. In May we prayed into the issue of disability justice, and this week it is the turn of modern slavery to take the spotlight.

Every year thousands of referrals are made to authorities concerning modern slavery, with incidents of trafficked children being reported in every local area of the UK. Victims can be exploited in a number of ways, including: forced labour or criminality, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and even organ harvesting.

One of the greatest challenges to combating modern slavery is the fact it is usually a hidden crime and is therefore hard to spot. Anti-slavery day takes place on 18th October, and is an opportunity for churches to reflect upon the words of Isaiah 61:1 *“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”*

What can churches actually do in response to modern slavery? The first thing would be educating ourselves to spot the signs. This can be done by viewing the resources at [togetherfree.org.uk](https://togetherfree.org.uk).

Secondly, churches can identify areas where they are engaging with vulnerable people in the community, such as night shelters and food banks, as these are areas where there is a higher risk of victims of modern slavery.

Thirdly, consider whether your church might adopt a modern slavery policy and explore whether it might help establish a local antislavery partnership with other faith groups in your community.

#### Prayer Points

- Pray for those who are working to end modern slavery - that they might expose the crimes being committed behind closed doors and bring justice to the oppressed.
- Pray for the victims - for courage to speak out and seek help, for healing and for ongoing protection.
- Pray for traffickers and exploiters - that the love of God might break into their lives and transform their thinking and actions.