



Weekly Prayer Focus: 12th March 2023

Social Justice: Poverty

The cost of living crisis is now common currency in our society. Perhaps less well understood are the deep seated 'structural problems' that have pushed many into poverty, or held others in poverty, in the last fifteen years or more. CAP, Foodbanks, Pantries, Community Fridges and many other schemes have helped people practically, but have also shed a spotlight on where the 'system' is broken and outrageous injustices against individuals or families have been left unchallenged.

Into this Christians across our region have taken the initiative: either as churches, or forming bespoke charities, or partnering with others to simply 'love their neighbours'. Simple grace and compassion have been shown, giving windows for people onto Jesus who 'saw the crowd and had compassion'. A Kingdom mindset, open to God, operating in unexpected places (or people, or organisations) have allowed Christian organisations to lead the way, catalyse the support of the general public, and form extensive partnerships with incredible results. For example several Foodbanks have partnered with Citizen's Advice, turning each £1,000 of grant money into £5,000 of help directly into bank accounts of those in need!

All this is encouraging ... but (we must be honest) exhausting! Sustaining through the pandemic and now ramping up with the current crisis (eg 60% increase in demand for some Foodbanks) leaves the faithful servants and volunteers depleted in their reserves. At the same time culture is shifting to 'accept' having organisations such as Foodbanks embedded into how society works – steps in the wrong direction. We want to show grace and compassion to those in need, and at the same time change society so that people can flourish in their own right – God's Kingdom, here on earth!

Please pray for:

- Christian-led initiatives across our region.
- The spiritual and emotional energy for local organisations (eg Foodbanks) to simply keep going.
- Conversations about Jesus to happen amidst the practical helping of people in need.
- Change in the 'principalities and powers' that affect our government policies and structural systems.