

16th May 2020 Cardiff Circuit Month of Prayer

Today's thoughts are provided by Revd Nick Oborski.

"O God you are my God, earnestly I seek you: my soul thirsts for you"

PSALM 63:1

In its three weeks of prayer the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity reminded me of so many who serve us. I hear most days what is like to be in retail sales from my son who works for Iceland. LICC summed this industry up:

"retailers and manufacturers provide us with goods that are often essential, beautiful, and innovative. Whilst many stores have been forced to close, some manufacturers have become central to the country's response to Covid-19." Below some thoughts from people involved in the industry as quoted in LICC's prayer under the headings Give Thanks and Ask for God's help

Giving thanks ...

- 'The constructive way my leadership team and the organisation as a whole has responded to the crisis suggests God at work.' God is at work 'helping us to have patience and empathy for clients and employees.'
- I sense God 'challenging managers of clothing brands about whether they will cancel orders to suppliers or not. We're thinking about our obligations to suppliers of clothing in the developing world who employ large numbers of poor people with no safety net.'

Ask for God's help...

Pressures: What are the pressures affecting this context?

- 'It's difficult to ensure that there is still enough work to go around, because business has fallen more than expected. We're dealing with clients who are stuck in one room all day, and so more stressed and anxious, and therefore more frustrated at us when something isn't right.'
- 'It's hard to ensure our staff can operate safely, and to manage ongoing and unpredictable personnel absences due to the virus. We've also had to furlough almost one third of our staff. Supply chain instability just adds to these issues.'

Praying God's heart for these people and situations...

Loving God we thank you for those who are working in supermarkets and other retail outlets ensuring we get the things we need. We recognise their fears of being infected and we pray for their safety as they make deliveries, stack shelves, and process our shopping through the tills. We thank you for the work to release more online delivery slots and for those who pack and deliver our orders to our door. We remember too those whose businesses are closed and whose staff are on furlough or have been made unemployed. We think of those overseas in impoverished situations who rely on orders from British companies which are now not coming. As we look to the future, we ask that we might look at the impact of our supply chains on all who work in these industries. Amen

Praying for the Wales Synod and Our Circuit

Our Church Treasurers met on Wednesday night to talk through the impact of our Churches being closed. There were stories of increased giving, of cheques arriving through the post, of people trying to ensure their weekly envelope or cash giving is arriving now with the church rather than waiting for the next time we physically meet together. There was a recognition that many of our expenses continue and that many churches are significantly hit by a loss of letting income. The Circuit committed to playing its part in helping in this time of need. We bring this and other practical needs to our God.

A Prayer

Loving God we know that you have given us all the resources we need. We pray for wisdom for our Treasurers, Church Stewards, Ministers, and Circuit Stewards as they help to manage these during this difficult time. We ask for wisdom as they look to the future and consider how budgets should be set. Help them to know where the focus of the circuit mission should be as we move forward and give them the courage to trust in your provision. Amen