

## **Reflections and Hymns – with thanks to Shirley Deanery.**

How can we serve, care and pray well during recession? We articulate how recession touches our communities, church fellowship and worship.

Sharing stories – with discretion, consider local needs. There are some examples here. Note any other situations that strike you as important for our churches to be sensitive to.

*A young woman considers cash flow in her own creative business. She may have to sell property bequeathed by her late father in order to keep things afloat, generating heated discussion with siblings.*

*A man in HR in a manufacturing company is feeling like Lady Macbeth handling redundancies.*

*A couple recently married are both made redundant by different companies within a few days of each other.*

### **Recession at work and home.**

Let one of your group read the, not quite as sexist as it first appears, passage from Proverbs 31:10-21.

As you meet this woman, seeing her domestic management and good investment :

- Are there any domestic issues you think Church should be sensitive to in recession?
- Do you sense any gender difference in the way recession affects us?
- What do we want to say from our Biblical heritage about investment, loss and profit?

### **What kind of church?**

Hear Jonah's reaction when Nineveh repented of its sin: Jonah chapter 4. Could the church be Jonah?

- How can church and church members comment helpfully on recession?
- In the morally risky period of relief as economy recovers, how may we help recovery be wise rather than complacent?
- What have we to say to the worlds of politics and industry at a time like this?

Here are some prophetic characters. Circle any you feel characterise your church's response. Mark with an asterix any think your church should be more like....

*Angry Amos*  
*Raging at injustice*

*Prudent 'domestic goddess'*  
*From proverbs - respected for steering a careful course and helping the poor from her savings.*

*Wistful Hosea*  
*Longing for people to know God.*

*Gloomy Jeremiah*  
*Painfully sharing the sorrows of the people*

*Humble Isaiah*  
*Daringly provocative, realistic yet hopeful*

*Opportunist Paul*  
*Using any crisis as a chance to preach the gospel*

## Honest worship and fellowship

In the light of all we have explored, reflect as a group on

- How we may helpfully pray or unhelpfully pray for our congregation and neighbourhood?
- What we can honour, what can we critique, what can we give?
  - For the unemployed
  - For the unpaid
  - For workers, industry and commerce
  - For politicians

Share any helpful ideas and resources from your churches' worship, study, liturgy and life.

## Doing justly, loving mercy.

1 Corinthians 12.

Our churches relationships and sense of belonging to one another across the world may be an enriching perspective to bring to discussion about economy. Fair Trade, cheap labour, environmental questions and healthy agriculture may all be issues we can point to and reflect on. It is a time when connectivity is visible to others and crisis has perhaps exposed the myth of individualism in market behaviour.

- How far is there a connection between the impatience of a credit fuelled economy and the impatience that leads to thirst for oil, that leads to war and interminable suspicion between east and west?
- Is there a chance to reconsider our assumption that we can have whatever we want as soon as we want it, not only with regard to children's bikes, but also our astonishingly luxurious lifestyle in the west?

## Hymn Book 'Hymns Old and New'

**252** 'Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by endless pain'.  
Words : John L Bell. Music Sally Gardens. Trad. Irish (Sally Gardens)

**268** 'Jesus Christ is waiting'  
Words : John Bell

**545** 'When God almighty came to earth'  
Words : Iona Community. Music O Waly, Waly. Trad. English.

## Hymn Book 'Hymns and Psalms'

**774** 'Lord, thy church on earth is seeking'  
Words : Hugh Sherlock (1905-) CCLI Licence 264319 Music Abbots Leigh

## Hymn Book 'Wild Goose'

'We cannot measure how you heal'  
Words John L. Bell and Graham Maule. Music Ye banks and braes Trad Scottish