

## **“Your kingdom come.....”**

Jesus walked the good news of His kingdom into neighbourhoods where people lived and worked. He listened, He healed, He restored and challenged people in the midst of their day-to-day messy lives and broken relationships. He taught the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed and a father who loved his Prodigal Son. He took His kingdom and its values of faith, thankfulness, forgiveness and humility to where people were living and to where the values of His kingdom were needed.

The same good news of His kingdom is desperately required in neighbourhoods today, especially by the next generation. This generation are largely absent from our churches, but of course congregate in our schools. If Christian churches are to engage with young people they will need to serve schools. So what might it mean to see His Kingdom come within our education system?

Each day teachers walk into schools with hundreds of unchurched children and young people. They probably meet more young people on an hourly basis than any church leader or youth worker meets in a year, yet this is largely ignored by the church. Teachers are on the front line with the next generation with all the opportunity and challenge that entails. Yet teachers as a profession are struggling with low morale, overwork and difficulties in recruiting or retaining staff. Churches need to examine how they could support teachers. Could they offer practical support – e.g. provide a meal each week? Do they add to their workload with church duties? Can they commit to pray regularly for them and their schools?

The current generation of young people are facing difficulties no previous generation has ever had to. Are we as Christians demonstrating, modelling and praying Kingdom values into young lives addicted to Social Media, that struggle with sexting and cyber bullying, have broken families, a generation with access to pornography at a younger and younger age, increasingly using cannabis, subject to alarming rates of Child Sexual Exploitation & grooming and growing rates of mental health problems?

There are great opportunities for Christians to serve schools through Collective Worship, to help schools deliver Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural Values and quality RE or serving as a school governor. Prayer Spaces in Schools, Open the Book and other initiatives offer ideas to get started. I believe developing a strategy for school chaplaincy, which would enable the Kingdom of God to be a

present, useful, valued and established part of our education system should be part of our vision.

May I encourage you to pray, 'May Your Kingdom come' in to our education system. Just imagine the difference it could make if we all committed to this!

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