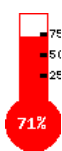


How spiritual is a cup of tea?

Last month our church here in Fulbourn and the other churches from our team, in Great and Little Wilbraham and Six Mile Bottom, made the decision to become Fairtrade Churches, so I thought I would take this opportunity to explain a little of what that means.

Fairtrade seeks to completely change trading structures and practice in favour of the poor and disadvantaged. Fairtrade facilitates trading partnerships that are based on equity and transparency rather than power and exploitation. Through this they are contributing to sustainable development for marginalised producers, workers and their families and communities. St Vigor's and our other churches have agreed to support these aims by offering Fairtrade tea and coffee at our events and by promoting the Fairtrade organisation.

 By becoming a Fairtrade church, St Vigor's is also helping Ely Diocese reach its goal of becoming a Fairtrade Diocese, as part of its 900th anniversary celebrations. For this to happen, half of the churches in the Diocese need to agree to become Fairtrade churches; the good news is that we are now almost 75% there!

The more churches that become Fairtrade, the wider we are spreading the news about this worthwhile organisation. We hope to encourage people to think about ethical shopping; whether a product is fairly traded, whether it is locally sourced, whether it has been ethically and humanely produced. The Bible tells us that we have a responsibility towards creation; by thinking about ethical shopping we are incorporating this important responsibility into our everyday lives.

As a church, we are excited about becoming Fairtrade because it is a true and genuinely helpful way to live out the gospel. Jesus' entire ministry revolved around stretching loving arms out to the poor and marginalised and offering them support, fighting against injustice in society and assuring equality and fairness. Even before the time of Jesus, in the Old Testament, God's command has always been one of justice and for the protection of the vulnerable in our world. These are all things that are still so important today, and Fairtrade offers us a way of reaching out to the people that God is so desperate for us to reach out to, and helping them in a way that is kind, responsible and sustainable; it is a mission with God's people at its very centre.

So next time you sit down to enjoy a cup of tea, or take a stroll to the shops, you might like to consider who has been affected in the chains of production, whether or not it has been just and fair. And perhaps we might all be a bit more aware about how spiritual a cup of tea can be.



Sarah Turner
Parish Assistant