

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

The “**Spiritual Stronghold**” for **June 2014** is “**Spiritual Renewal**”. We’re encouraging Churches and individual Christians throughout Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin to make this a focus for prayer on **Sunday 1st June 2014** during services wherever possible and in their own times of intercession and prayer.

In addition to the **Corporate Prayer** below, you will find some “**Points to Ponder**” with additional information and topics for which to pray plus details of **resources** that you may wish to research.

CORPORATE PRAYER

Heavenly Father

Thank You that You have provided all that is necessary for us to know You and to flourish spiritually as we walk in step with You.

Thank You for leaving us the Power of the Holy Spirit that helps us in our weaknesses to witness to our friends, family and social contacts; to worship You freely and to walk in a way that honours You. Please help us Father, to open our lives up to Your Spirit that we may increasingly know His presence and power in all that we think, say and do. Help us not to quench Him by resisting His direction, or to grieve Him by acting out of our own self-reliance.

Father, thank You for leaving us Your Word. Help us to treasure it, not simply to have it as a badge of honour that we bring to church, or on our bookshelves to look spiritual to our visitors. Let it be well used, read often, searched for its treasure, memorised and consulted for life’s decisions. Help us to give as much time to watching what it has to say, as we spend watching and indulging far less important or upright sources such as the TV or the Internet.

Father, thank You for leaving us brothers and sisters that remind us we are part of a larger family, and that can encourage us and instruct us. Please help us Lord to be contributors to that family, not constant takers. Help us to take the initiative in encouraging others and being kind to each other. Help us to think well of others, not assume the worst of them; and also to think before we say things that will tear down rather than build up.

We have not yet discovered all there is to know of You Lord, neither have we done all You have for us to do on this earth. We are hungry for more of You and humbly ask that You would empower us afresh and work in us and through us that we may become more like You and help others to know You too.

In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

POINTS TO PONDER

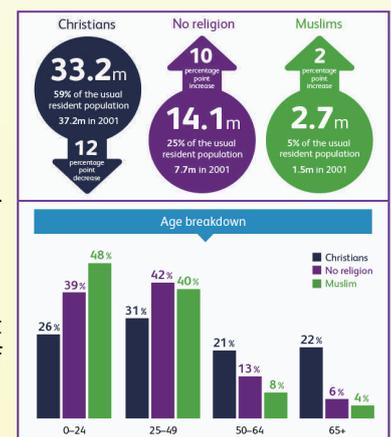
Faith in Britain (source – Office of National Statistics: Census 2011)

- **33.2m people** in UK consider themselves **Christian (down 12% since 2001)**
- **14.1m people** in UK consider themselves to have **no faith (up 10%)** + another **7.2m** people in UK did not answer the census question!
- **2.7m people** in UK consider themselves **Muslim (up 2%)**
- **Age breakdown** - see graphic opposite. This is a serious cause for concern. Whilst 57% of Christians are under the age of 50, 81% of those with no faith and 88% of those professing to be Muslim are in this age bracket.

We need to do more to share the Gospel with those under 50!

The Church in Britain (source – Dr Peter Brierley in conjunction with Christian Research publication “UK Church Statistics, 2005-2015 “)

- In 2010 there were **2.9 million churchgoers** - down from **3.5 million in 2000**. If present trends continue, church attendance in Britain is predicted to fall to **2.6 million by 2015** and **2.3 million by 2020**
- There are **50,700 churches or congregations** in the UK today (**up 2% since 2005**) = that equates to an average of **57 per congregation**
- There are **340 Christian denominations** in the UK (**up by 65 in 2006**) with **36,600 ministers (up 4% since 2005)**
- **Church membership** equates to **11% of the population (down 6% since 2005)**



SHROPSHIRE

Shropshire Hope 2014

Reading the Bible (source – Confidence in the Word website based on research undertaken by the Bible Society)

- **16% of REGULAR CHURCHGOERS** read their Bible **every day**
- **9%** read the Bible **several times a week**; **11%** at least **once a week** and **9%** **once a month**
- **14%** have not read their Bible in the **last year** and **18%** have **never read the Bible ever in their lives**

The challenge to see spiritual renewal in our county and nation may seem great but lets remember

“His power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20 - CEV)

As we pray and as we work together in unity spiritual transformation will occur!

RESOURCES

The following organisations provide further information on family life and relationships issues. Please note, not all are Christian-based but all offer practical assistance and resources.

| Organisation | Overview | Website |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Bible Society | Founded in 1804 to make the Scriptures available; help the church engage with the Bible more effectively and - through the arts, education, media and politics - to make the Bible available, accessible and credible in our culture | www.biblesociety.org.uk |
| Bible Gateway | Online resource providing numerous translations of the Bible (including audio versions) and relevant articles, reading plans and devotions | www.biblegateway.com |
| Christian Concern | Have a passion to see the United Kingdom return to the Christian faith and campaigns on various issues as well as helping provide legal advice for Christians experiencing religious discrimination | www.christianconcern.com |
| Christian Institute | Non-denominational Christian charity committed to upholding the truths of the Bible. Offers a range of resources and provides seminars on topical issues | www.christian.org.uk |
| Confidence in the Word | Website encouraging reading of the Bible | www.citw.org.uk |
| Brierley Consultancy | Undertakes and provides research, articles and books on church growth and leadership | www.brierleyconsultancy.com |
| World Prayer Centre | The World Prayer Centre is linked to many initiatives, serving prayer, mission, social action, family life and marginalised people and is involved in regional, national and international prayer and worship ministry. Their website contains articles and information on spiritual renewal | www.worldprayer.org.uk |

If you are aware of other organisations that you feel could be included please email us: admin@shropshirehope.co.uk



Make a long-term commitment to pray for your street – register on www.neighbourhoodprayer.net



Many thanks to **Revd Tim Coles**, Pastor of Ludlow Elim and a member of the **Shropshire Hope** organising team for compiling this Prayer Bulletin.