

### Churches of Shrewsbury unite with a single message - Try Praying!

After half a year of planning, the churches of Shrewsbury joined came to make a big splash in the town. Everyone from Orthodox to Salvation Army, Catholic to Pentecostal joined to put up banners, ads on buses and in the papers, all with the same invitation: Try Praying.



The invitation was backed up with a booklet and phone app, produced by 'There Is Hope' in Edinburgh, which takes users through 7 days of Christian praying. It is well produced and illustrated and it is written for those who don't do church (adults' and children's versions available).



Most important of all though, were the people - Christians who said to friends, family, colleagues or chance acquaintances 'prayer is important to me, would you like to try?' This happened mostly in homes, workplaces etc. but for a week, we also had the use of a former library bus which toured the town's squares and car parks with a pop-up café and resulted in 308 conversations about prayer (that's how many we noted, we think there were a lot more). Altogether we gave out nearly 5000 'credit cards' with website and contact details and a similar number of the prayer booklets.

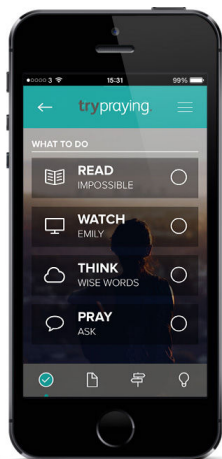


A key part of the project was its online presence, especially a Facebook group ([tryprayingShrewsbury](https://www.facebook.com/tryprayingShrewsbury)) which had a reach of 16,885 people over 4 weeks and a total of 1100 'reactions' ('likes' etc). We posted videos of local people giving honest accounts of their experiences of prayer. They are also on the web page ([trypraying.org.uk/tryprayingshrewsbury](https://trypraying.org.uk/tryprayingshrewsbury)).

Local media took an interest and we appeared in the Shropshire Star and Shrewsbury Chronicle as well as being interviewed live on Radio Shropshire.

We are in this for the long haul. The churches are still meeting every fortnight to pray for the town, and we plan to set up a prayer trail around the centre, as well as hosting some events in local venues giving people a chance to explore ways of praying. We know it is God who blesses and changes people; we want to do our bit.

Some lovely stories have emerged. Some are personal and we hope their owners will in due course be telling them themselves. Some we can share are



- a man gave a TryPraying booklet to a colleague, who later emailed to say he had been rather unsure but decided to give it a try, naming a problem with his pension and his job as his 'big issues'. He was rather surprised when his pension issued was sorted and he then received an invitation to an exciting job interview!
- A man, asked if he had ever prayed, replied "Not since I was 11 years old." He had been thrown out of Sunday School at that age, for asking too many questions! After some conversation he felt that it might be time to give praying a go again.
- An 8 year old girl asked if there really was a party in heaven when we got to know God (she had heard the story of the lost coin). She said she didn't know what to think but she had picked up a TryPraying booklet and, in her words, 'found it rather interesting'. She was going to give praying a go.
- 'I gave up praying years ago, due to a hurt. I saw the words 'try praying' on the side of a bus and knew it was time to start again.'
- 'I tried praying for a week and by the end of it I knew there was something God wanted me to do.'
- A nonagenarian, bound to her bed, listened to the problems of one of her carers and then offered to pray for her. She gratefully accepted. The elderly lady then felt she would like to offer her Try Praying booklet to the carer, also received with thanks. She said 'that's the first time I've done something like that, and I'm really pleased to have been able to share something of what matters to me!' She now has another booklet, in case anyone else would like one too.
- A sixth-form student had a conversation with some of her friends about how to pray as a result of them watching the video. Another young person and some of her friends decided to help some homeless people with gifts of food; they also offered a Try Praying booklet.
- A person read the Try Praying booklet and was particularly struck by the story at the beginning about the twins discussing the existence of 'mother'. This began a journey of enquiry and commitment and the person now identifies herself as Christian.
- The local police asked for 50 booklets to put out in the remand centre.

All that really matters in prayer is the relationship with God that grows. We have been quite struck, though, by the way God has responded in rather direct ways in peoples' lives. We don't need to know everything that happens as a result of TryPraying, but we do pray that all of it would bless people in our town and that the community of believers would grow.

If you would like to do the same in your town or area, the materials we used are available from [www.thereishope.co.uk](http://www.thereishope.co.uk) and we in Shrewsbury would be happy to share how we did it here.

Charles Ruxton  
Chair of TryPraying Shrewsbury  
01743 891636

Something made you think?  
**Trypraying.**  
trypraying.co.uk download the app  
tryprayingshrewsbury  
Get the booklet at  
your local church or in town

trypraying is a joint project by the churches of Shrewsbury using materials from thereishope and trypraying