

## Creative idea

### for prayerfully examining your shopping with God

*We first developed this resource for a morning prayer session when we wanted to give everyone in our praying community the opportunity to just sit with God and prayerfully consider their shopping with him.*

*It was during Fairtrade Fortnight and as well as praying about trade, joining in with campaign actions and raising awareness about resources we had already created around economic justice, fair-trade, trade justice and global poverty (see [www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet-search](http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet-search)) we were engaged in quite a large-scale [public act of witness around Fairtrade](#) and the worth of each individual created in God's image.*

*It felt even more important than ever to ensure each of us was re-visiting our own lifestyle and purchasing decisions too, and re-dedicating our choices to God. So we designed this resource – to use ourselves – and to share with you... to help us think about being even more prayerfully engaged and accountable around our purchasing choices.*

*Although we completed this resource in a group session, and shared some of our reflections together afterwards, we each worked through it individually and privately with God; and we'd encourage you to do the same. It's an act of worship, of surrender... an important part of our devotion, especially in a culture so consumed with consuming... and so globally interconnected.*

*There is plenty of information out there to tell you all the different things you could and should do to be a more ethical consumer – we are hugely thankful for, and reliant, on it. There are also an increasing number of Bible study resources looking at justice issues and money – these are brilliant. But this resource aims to be neither; it is not meant to primarily inform or instruct so much as to simply provide a framework to create space for you to sit at God's feet and listen.*

*Our prayer is that it will be the Spirit that prompts you about anything you might want to explore doing differently as you shop in order to love God – and each one in seven billion he so loves – even more. So rather than providing a list of all the things you might want to do differently, this creative prayer resource helps you simply start with where you are at – honestly and naturally – and gives an opportunity for you to see how God might be leading you forward step by step as he convicts your heart of changes you can make together.*

*At the end of the resource, after the reflective prayer questions, you will find links to some places you can find out more about specific practices and retailers. All you need to complete it is a copy of it, a pen and some paper...*

*If you're printing multiple copies for a group session, print only pages 2 and 3 to reproduce the main resource content without these instructions.*

*Begin by thanking God, and opening your heart up to him...*

*For the products you enjoy, the money and other resources you have, and for his grace over your life and decisions. Dedicate this time to him and ask for his help... if you want a specific prayer of preparation, there are a number of helpful personal meditations in our collection of [written prayers about economic justice](#):*

*Now start lifting up where you shop to God...*

1.) Make a list of the retailers - physical and online - that you regularly use...

2.) When you choose/have chosen which (physical) shops you go to and buy from, which of the following factors come into your decision-making, and what order would they usually come in?

- Habit
- Convenience - close to home or on way back from work, school etc
- Close - to minimise environmental impact of travelling by car
- Price - to save money
- Price - to give money away
- Quality of products they stock
- General preference/ good feeling about the experience of being in that shop - visuals, layout, space, ease etc
- Customer service/ relationships
- Ethical reputation of the retailer in reference to their supply chain etc
- Ethical purpose of the retailer in terms of where their profits go
- Anything else...

3.) How would the list under point 2 change and/or re-order for the online shops/sites you use?

4.) Have you ever prayed about where to shop - generally or for a specific trip? What do you think about the idea of doing that?

5.) Have you ever researched any of the retailers you regularly use to find out how ethical they are, or contacted them to ask them questions about their practices or to query a specific concern?

*Now lift up the specific products you regularly buy...*

1.) Make a list of the products/brands you regularly buy... Then next to each product write one word to describe the main reason/s why...

2.) Have you ever prayed about making a specific purchase? Or what specific product/brand to buy?

3.) What would make you most likely to pray about a purchase? (For example big one off purchases, gifts, things you're not sure your desire for is godly, things you are concerned have been made in a way that was careless about people or the environment...)

4.) Have you ever researched any of the products/brands you regularly use to find out how ethical they are, or contacted them to ask them questions about their practices or to query a specific concern?

5.) Have you ever stopped shopping somewhere, or buying a particular product, or notified a retailer or manufacturer that you're boycotting them, because of discovering they are exploiting people or the environment?

6.) The following list mentions some of the most common products grown in poorer communities which you could buy certified... for the ones you would regularly buy, how much of a priority is it for you for the ones you choose to be Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or Utz certified?

- Tea
- Coffee (and coffee flavoured products)
- Chocolate (and products containing chocolate)
- Bananas
- Nuts
- Wine
- Dried fruit
- Sugar
- Flowers (British grown is also an ethically motivated choice here for different reasons)
- Cotton

*Take some time to think about producers and makers...*

1.) Do you know anyone personally who makes or grows something they sell? And if so, what insights do you have about the time, skill, joys and pressures involved? (Could be an artisan, crafts person, baker etc)

2.) How do you view their products as a result of knowing them and their context? And them?

3.) If you personally knew – or at least knew the names and stories of – each producer behind the products you buy, do you think your attitudes to the products you buy and/or some of your purchasing decisions might change? How?

*Ask God for his help with moving forward*

1.) Have any of the questions above made you think differently about what you buy, where you shop and who makes your products?

2.) If so, what do you want to pray God will help you do differently or find out more about?

***Further information, if you'd like it, is available at:***

NB if you would like to find out more, you can find out brilliant information quickly and easily here:

Ethical Consumer: [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)

Ethical Superstore: [www.ethicalsuperstore.com](http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com)

The Good Shopping Guide: [www.thegoodshoppingguide.com](http://www.thegoodshoppingguide.com)

Traidcraft: [www.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk)

Fairtrade Foundation: [www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/buying-fairtrade](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/buying-fairtrade)

Stop the Traffik: [www.stophetraffik.org/uk/](http://www.stophetraffik.org/uk/)