

The responsibilities of leadership during coronavirus

We have recently heard the word privilege used many times in relation to those in Government. We might assume it relates to education or to class, but in fact it refers to our ability to make choices, simple everyday choices for our future, our families and our well-being. So many of us are privileged even if we don't consider ourselves part of the elite.

During this recent COVID crisis many of us relinquished our privilege, that is our ability to choose for the sake of the wider community's well-being. For others their limited choices were even further restricted by the regulations imposed by the Government. This has caused inconvenience and anxiety for some, for others real struggle and tragedy. Some have been unable to visit dying relatives, unable to attend funerals, unable to visit children in hospital. Others have chosen to live and work sacrificially, helping others by putting themselves on the front-line of care.

People in leadership have privilege but also additional responsibilities to the people they serve. This may result in them relinquishing personal choice, which is technically allowed, in order to stand in solidarity with those whose loss of free choice is causing acute suffering. Leaders who expect others to make sacrificial choices for the greater good of the wider community, need also to model and embody what they are asking from others. To live simply by the letter of the law and not the spirit of the community is neither right nor just.

There is a sacred call in acting sacrificially for the community and we can feel betrayed when those who should embody justice seem to defect from this. For us as Methodists, our call to live in the light of God's grace, means that we must challenge all behaviours that further disadvantage the poorest among us. As President and Vice-President we encourage you to make your opinions heard on behalf of struggling communities by writing directly to your MP when you see issues of injustice.

Grace is for all, not just for some, and we should always be active in shifting the balance of power so that all people can flourish.

We are actively working with ecumenical partners, interfaith colleagues, JPIT and the media team to act wisely and courageously and to speak to those in power with our distinctive 'Methodist voice'. Please pray for us, and for the people who need us most.

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Prof Clive Marsh

Find out more about how you can join with the JPIT campaign, Stay Alert to Justice

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/stayalert/>

and watch a short film [here](#)

A prayer

How long, Lord, for how long, must we live in exile and watch the sufferings of the poor?

How long must we keep silent when our bones cry out for justice for the vulnerable and weak?

How long must we wait for equality, for privilege to be overthrown for the sake of the common good?

How much longer must good people struggle and the honest be disregarded?

God of truth and justice, call us out, to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly in ways of integrity and peace and may our anger be for righteousness and our actions for the good of all.

Amen