

RESTORATION: 3 Jan – 10 Jan

You will remember that in recent years the current British Prime Minister spoke about 'Broken Britain'. There was then a 'plan of action' resulting in the introduction of 'The Big Society'. This came back in 2010 and was supposed to deal with perceived 'broken communities'. What started out as a very public set of aims and objectives didn't end up being as effective as was envisaged, although it stimulated much discussion and recognition of the great work being done by volunteers and charities throughout the country. In many ways the areas of brokenness in society haven't improved, in fact they have deteriorated.

However this isn't the end of the story. There are villages, towns and cities seeing 'Restoration', and this is in no small part thanks to faithful Christian people in our churches who are offering practical support and service that is evidence of God's love in action. It is pretty much a fact that if you take Christian volunteers and charities out of British society large parts of communities would fall apart!

If society is struggling to cope, that means individuals are struggling to cope. The mission of the church is to make a difference to both individual people and groups of people. The message of the gospel is clear, God intends us to share 'good news' and not just verbally! God intends us to act and thereby demonstrate love in practical ways, not just talk about it. It is a well-known fact that people who receive love in kind are more receptive to hearing the spoken words of love through the gospel message of Jesus Christ. We are made spirit, soul and body. A lot of people in society show clear evidence of have broken minds and bodies and this can be because their spirit has been crushed and their ability to cope impaired. So this week, using Isaiah 43:18-21 as our inspiration we pray for restoration.

KEY BIBLE VERSES The following scriptures emphasise a) the importance of prayer in relation to Restoration b) How important it is to influence through what we say and c) The way we live determines whether we are 'builders' who can restore ruined lives. The scriptures are both individual and corporate:-

Individual: *And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted¹ to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."* **Luke 4:17**

*Those from among you shall **build the old waste places**; you shall **raise up the foundations of many generations**; and you shall be called the **Repairer of the Breach**, The **Restorer of Streets** to Dwell In. **Isaiah 50:12***

Corporate: *And they shall **rebuild the old ruins**, they shall **raise up the former desolations**, and they shall **repair the ruined cities**, the desolations of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your ploughmen and your vinedressers.*
Isaiah 61:4

Prayer Points

- Pray for a huge increase in compassion for the downtrodden and marginalised.
- Pray that more people will be called into 'rebuilding' roles in society.
- Pray for a greater 'creativity in action' energy for all our Elim Family to bring hope and restoration into society.
- Pray for an awakening in the hearts of people to be 'called' to be 'Repairers of the breach' in our society.

Creative Ideas

- Identify areas of brokenness in your community and write them down to help focus your prayers.
- You could use a plain jigsaw and write prayers on the back of them. Then put the jigsaw together as a reminder of God healing brokenness and disconnection. Maybe you could draw the cross on the plain jigsaw?
- Why not draw or print off a huge picture of a heart? Then take some plasters and write the names of those who need restoring. Stick them to the heart.