

Week One **'Reuse, Recycle, Freecycle'**

'Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. He handed out the bread to those who were seated. He gave them as much as they wanted. And he did the same with the fish. When all of them had enough to eat, Jesus spoke to his disciples. "Gather the leftover pieces," he said. "Don't waste anything." So they gathered what was left over from the five barley loaves. They filled 12 baskets with the pieces left by those who had eaten.'

When Jesus fed the 5,000 in John 6:11-13, He was careful enough to make sure that every last piece of food was eaten, everyone had enough to eat and not a scrap was wasted; a sure sign of being resourceful and less wasteful. To be resourceful is to be alert to things God has already provided, things we already have that we can use in a different way or place especially if it benefits or brings joy to others.

Do you pop into your local coffee house every morning to buy your regular coffee, which gets handed to you in one of those paper cups? Are you still throwing away empty plastic bottles or paper in the main bin? Or do you throw away your old furniture in the local garbage when you want to make way for a new item? By doing these things we are inadvertently contributing to global warming by sending them towards landfill sites, when this doesn't have to be the case.

About 50% of household rubbish ends up in landfill sites¹ which emits greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere. By recycling our waste, reusing and Freecycling what we don't want, it diverts the rubbish away from landfill and instead gets processed back into a variety of different things such as packages, containers and even fabrics for clothing or simply reused by someone who needs or wants it.

This week's challenge is to reuse, recycle and Freecycle

Use reusable plastic containers instead of plastic wrapping or sandwich bags to make packed lunches or store food, make sure everything that has a recycling logo on it goes into the recycling bin and give your old clothes to charity or to family or friends that will appreciate them instead of throwing them away. There are endless amounts of things you can do for the challenge this week; you'll feel good for doing so!

Prayer: Father God, teach us to value the resources you've generously created. Help us to challenge our disposable culture and take time to look for reusable options. Teach us to prioritise how we use our time, so that in our busyness we do not become wasteful. Cause us to view resources differently, and help us to remember that when we throw something away it doesn't disappear. Lord, help us to worship you through taking care of your earth and the poorest people most affected by climate change. Let our actions be worship to you each time we recycle, reuse or donate unwanted items, may it be pleasing to you. Amen.

Bonus action: There are a few websites you can visit to help you with this week's action. Such as: The Besom (www.besom.com), a service where you can give your time, money, skills or items that would benefit others and make a difference to people's lives. At Freecycle (www.freecycle.org), you can recycle your unwanted possessions, and why not also have a look at Street Bank (www.streetbank.com), a great site which helps you share and borrow things with your friends and neighbours.

Let us know how you are getting along with your carbon fast via Facebook and Tweet @carbonfast #carbonfast to share your carbon cutting stories.

¹ Mother Nature Network, Defra, SITA UK, Environment Agency

Week Two 'Less footprints, more footsteps'

'Look up toward the heavens. Then look at the earth. The heavens will vanish like smoke. The earth will wear out like clothes. Those who live there will die like flies. But I will save you forever. My saving power will never end.'

Does this passage from Isaiah 51:6 describe the direction our world is heading?

Many of our lifestyle choices are as a result of changing times and advancing technology which have made far more goods and services available to us than ever before. There are many benefits, but have we also come to expect an unsustainable level of speed, convenience and comfort?

When looking at the level of emissions generated from personal car usage and the impact it's having on climate change, there comes a point when we must ask ourselves whether convenience, comfort or even laziness rank above flooded homes, displaced people or hungry children in our hearts and in our minds. It makes you think when you look at it from a different perspective.

Road transport accounts for 22%² of total emissions of CO₂ in the UK with exhausts coughing out high levels of greenhouse gases continuing to contaminate the earth's atmosphere on a daily basis.

This weekly Lenten action is to reduce our carbon footprint by using our vehicles a lot less - or even altogether.

This week aim to walk or cycle to work, school or to the shops instead of using the car. If your destination is only a short distance, consider leaving the car at home and getting some light exercise by walking it instead - after all a cold engine wastes a considerable amount of energy just to warm up and can be avoided if it is only taking a short journey. If you are unable to walk or cycle then use the bus or train or any other type of public transport to get about this week if you don't already. For those who are unable to walk or take public transport then arranging with somebody to car share to work is the next best thing.

However you decide to get around remember it's all about reducing your footprint out of love for your neighbour, and turning everyday activities into acts of worship as you do so.

Prayer: Father, help us to see how our lifestyle affects your creation and to remember people who are suffering because of it. Please give us insight, wisdom and the courage to face the truth – no matter how uncomfortable or inconvenient it may be. Help us to turn positive actions from this weeks' fast into habits. Encourage us when our actions seem small and remind us how important they are, and how connected our lives are to our global neighbours. Enable us to make wise choices and give us grace in our daily lifestyle decisions. Let our sacrifices be worship unto you. Amen.

Bonus action: For more ideas, inspiration and useful tips on how to lead a more environmentally friendly lifestyle, visit www.lisforlifestyle.com to see what changes you could make today and stick to for the future.

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² Environmental Protection UK (2013) *Impacts of Car Pollution* Available at <http://www.environmental-protection.org.uk/transport/car-pollution/>

Week Three

'A loving dominion'

'Then God said, "Let us make man in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole earth. Let them rule over all of the creatures that move along the ground.'

Genesis 1: 26 explains how God gave man the right to stewardship over the earth and of all the living things that are contained within it. Whilst giving humans this right to stewardship, He also taught us to take care of and respect his creation and to sustain and replenish the land. But if we were to look closely, do we feel that we have done that? Are we really playing our part as individuals in doing what God has asked us to do or have we simply taken advantage of God's kindness?

Giving human beings dominion included permission to use animals as a source of food which is admissible, but if that becomes excessive, and the result damaging to the lives of others and the environment then we need to take steps in order to stop or at least reduce some of the damage that we are causing. After loving God with all our hearts, all our souls and all our minds as He taught us, He commanded us to 'love our neighbours as ourselves.' We must be conscious that this meant both the direct actions of loving, caring and giving etc. but also through choices that affect others indirectly.

This week's action is to reduce beef consumption.

The process by which most beef is produced unfortunately contributes to climate change in several ways, including deforestation from using more land for production, more methane from more animals - especially cattle, making and transporting fertiliser, and burning fossil fuels to run machinery. It is a major contributor to global warming with farming and production contributing about 18% of total greenhouse gases³ through the emission of carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane gases into the atmosphere.

Though dairy production doesn't rank as high as beef production in terms of total emissions it still contributes a large share of carbon emissions during its production process. By reducing our consumption of beef to that of the lowest fifth of consumers we can lower Co2 emissions by 2.78 million tonnes a year; in the UK that's about 0.45 tonnes of Co2 per person per year⁴.

If we were to make comparisons between beef and chicken production for example, cows give off more methane which they belch into the atmosphere through ruminant production (an effect of having four stomachs!). Chickens do not graze, and do not produce methane through belching and cause far fewer emissions during production.

Cheese like beef requires the same ruminant production, with a kilo of cheese emitting 13kg of CO2 compared with beef at 17kg.⁵

Have you taken part in 'Meat free Mondays or 'Dairy-free Days' and thought it was a bit easy? This year for Lent we're asking Carbon Fasters to go without beef (or dairy for vegetarians) for 3 out of the 7 days this week and you are free to choose whichever days you do it. For hard-core carbon fasters why not try going a whole 7 days without beef or dairy?

³ University of Cambridge (2012) *Research News* Available at: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/reducing-consumption-of-red-and-processed-meat-could-make-a-major-contribution-to-cutting-greenhouse-gas-emissions/>

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Berners-Lee (2010) *How bad are bananas?* London. Profile Books

Whichever level you wish to do, be sure to have fun doing it and try out different recipes that do not involve these products.

Prayer: Father we thank you for your creation including the plants and animals and the diversity which they bring. Help us to care for them wisely and sustainably, so we can help to preserve precious ecosystems you made and food supplies for people which you've blessed us with. We pray for increased awareness about the contribution of meat production and consumption to climate change, and for leaders across the world who have responsibility for negotiating how to tackle climate change. Please help them to be bold and ambitious in how they respond, remembering that the poorest and most vulnerable people who are hit hardest have done the least to cause it. Amen.

Bonus action: The world produces enough food for everyone, but not everyone has enough food. Last month we launched an exciting new campaign called the 'Enough food for everyone iF' campaign which saw many come together to tackle the issue of global hunger. The aim of the campaign is to prevent 1 in every 8 person globally going to bed hungry every night and 2.8 million children dying from malnutrition each year.

Please continue to pray for and remember those around the world that struggle to feed themselves daily due to the effects of climate change, and also pray for our government and world leaders especially in the run up to the G8 in June to not only stick to the promises they've made on aid but also for good governance and decision making geared towards tackling climate change to help the world's poorest people.

Please go to http://www.tearfund.org/en/get_involved/campaign/if/ to learn more about the Enough food for everyone iF campaign and take the online action.

To view Tearfund's position on meat eating and climate change please click [here](#).

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Week Four 'Water Wisdom'

'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge; neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare; neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.'

The verses from Leviticus 19:9-10 expresses wonderfully how we are to treat our precious resources, take what we need and not strip what we have to the bare minimum leaving nothing for our neighbours.

For Lent this week, we are looking at saving energy through water usage.

Water is a vital resource that lies all around us in our rivers, streams, lakes, oceans and ice caps and is home to a myriad of God's wonderful underwater creations. No living thing on this planet can survive without it and is imperative to survival, yet we take it for granted because it is readily available and constantly flowing out of our taps 24/7. It is easy for us to forget how scarce water is in drier climates, where unfortunately droughts are increasing as a result of climate change; and to forget that clean, safe water is out of reach for many people.

We all need water to live. There's no need to feel guilty for that. But many of us are unaware of how much energy is used up to ensure that we have clean, safe running water instantly available to us at the turn of the tap. Heating water uses a lot of energy and accounts for about 5 per cent of total carbon emissions⁶. By monitoring how much water we use we can take steps towards reducing our waste and carbon footprint.

Running a hot bath uses a considerable amount of energy to generate. This week why not stick to showers instead to save water? When you boil the kettle for a cup of tea refrain from filling the kettle all the way to the top, fill it with only the amount of water you will need.

There are so many things we can do to save on water usage. Keep an eye on yours this week and encourage those in your household to do the same too.

Prayer: Father, thank you for providing us with plentiful water to drink and meeting all our basic needs. Help us not to take any blessing for granted, but instead be faithful stewards of your earth's resources. As we make changes that may be inconvenient, we draw from your well of living water that never runs dry, and remember that everything we have comes from you. Help us to not be overwhelmed by climate change, but to be filled with your hope for your planet. Help us to start where we can, in our homes, and remember that we are part of a global movement of Christians changing our lifestyles and turning the tide. Amen.

Bonus action: To get a detailed perspective of the issues of climate change in countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America including grassroots stories of what climate change means to them, view Tearfund's published report 'Dried Up, Drowned Out' by following this link http://issuu.com/tearfund/docs/dried_out_-_20pp_lr/1.

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⁶ Kinver, M. (2010) Water CO2 calculator for UK homes goes online. BBC News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10310883>

Week Five

‘And watt does the Lord require of you?’

‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’.

This popular verse in John 3:16 is the central self-sacrifice of the Bible. Jesus was the most precious gift God had to give, but because He loved the world so much he gave up his only son to save us from our sins and so that we can live eternal life in Him. What a sacrifice.

The sacrifices we can make are much smaller. But we can still make sacrifices that show love, for example to the farmer who cannot yield good crops to make a living and feed their family as climate change makes their rain unreliable, or for example to the family whose home gets swept away by floods. There are many ways but one of these is by showing love through sacrifice.

Think of your most treasured possession, the one thing that means everything to you and you couldn't imagine being without? Now imagine giving that item up in order to save somebody's life. As sad as it may be to let that possession go we wouldn't think twice about giving it up if it meant that someone had a chance to live life. But what if we were asked to forgo or reduce the use of items or possessions that didn't mean that much to us, that they were just things of less importance that we had yet still had the same outcome of saving lives? We would be much more willing. This could be the case when giving up or reducing the use of our possessions which constantly use up large amounts of energy in order to work, namely our electrical items.

This week's action focuses on the amount of energy that is wasted when electrical appliances are used or even just left on standby.

Leaving appliances on when not in use or on standby uses up surprisingly large amounts of energy. The table in this link www.carbonfootprint.com/energyconsumption.html on the Carbon Footprint website shows just how much energy an average household's electrical appliances can take up.

Do you listen to the radio every morning before work? Watch morning programmes on television whilst having breakfast before school? Or are you simply addicted to your mobile, laptop or games console? Whatever it may be, the challenge will be to live without one electricity dependant item for one whole week. What item will you sacrifice?

Whilst you challenge yourself this week be sure to follow some simple, easy carbon cutting tips such as unplugging chargers (such as phone and laptop chargers) from the mains when they are not in use, not leaving anything on standby as they use a substantial amount of power even in standby mode and also switching of the light when leaving the room.

In order to be Christ like we must strive to be like Him, be willing to sacrifice our worldly possessions especially if the result of such action benefits others, the environment around us and is pleasing to Him.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, please help us to follow in your footsteps, living humbly and simply. And show us how we can encourage others to do the same, so that we can take steps together, as part of your church, to challenge materialism and other causes of human-induced climate change. Please help us to continue taking positive steps to decrease our impacts on people and planet by caring for creating, loving our neighbours and acting justly. Please motivate and sustain us to take action and show us areas of our lives where we need to change. Amen.

Bonus action: If you want to take your energy saving a bit further, how about switching to green

energy supplier Ecotricity via this link:

http://www.tearfund.org/en/get_involved/give/keeping_better_company/ecotricity/ switching only takes a matter of minutes and you will be joining a company who believes in tackling climate change.

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Week Six 'God's gift'

'I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than eating? Aren't there more important things for the body than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?'

Matthew 6:25-26 reminds us that God is our source for our daily provisions, physically and spiritually. He created the sun and the rain; gave life to the plants and animals, wove together ecosystems, and placed natural resources in the earth's crust - all of which exist for God to delight in and to glorify him, and also to meet the needs of people.

But consumerism has got to the point where we not only buy things because we need them but because we just want them or expect them to fill some kind of emotional void.

Take for example the expression 'retail therapy'. Why might we feel the need to go on a shopping spree to buy many items and spend lots of money in order to feel good about ourselves or to make a situation better? Maybe seeking God's wisdom and guidance in the situation might be a more inexpensive and carbon free alternative!

Do we really feel the need to stock up on material possessions when in some cases we really have all we need, or can survive by getting by on what we already have?

Some of us lead a lifestyle requiring excessive possessions and material wealth when really we can do without. The Lord has his eye on the sparrow and on animals and insects much smaller than we are, therefore we should not worry about both our physical and emotional provisions.

The final challenge of the week is to be shop smart.

The best way to not clock up carbon emissions is by not buying anything at all. If you don't need it, don't buy it. Not only will you have reduced your carbon footprint but you will be saving money too in the process how about allocating a couple of days out of the week where you vow to not buy anything at all? Your challenge this week is to not impulse buy. Only buy items after you have stopped and thought about whether you really need it or if you just want it.

How often have you brought food items or products only to have to peel off layers of wrapping or packaging or find that the item doesn't even occupy half of the space in the box it came in? Do you have a colourful collection of supermarket carrier bags that you have saved after every shopping trip? If all of these things sound normal or familiar then consider your shopping habits and reflect on how it is contributing to carbon emissions and affecting climate change.

When buying food this week, make a conscious effort to buy items that are both local and in season, but of course you can make an exception for Fair Trade produce (www.fairtrade.org.uk) and as best as you can, avoid buying things that come packed in excessive packaging.

Prayer: God, thank you for provide for all of our needs and that you are a Father who gives good gifts to His children. Help us to give our shopping to you and detox us from the disease of consumerism so rampant in our society. Help us to be a thoughtful consumer, using our purchasing power for the greater good rather than our unnecessary comforts.

Lord, we are dependent on you for what we need. Remind us when we forget, and help us to look for our satisfaction in you not in the supermarket. Forgive us for allowing others to become dependent on ourselves for the essentials of life. Forgive us for the ease with which we slip into the

mind-set that sees our consumerism as a right. Help us to view the earth's resources the way you do. Amen.

Bonus action: Tearfund believes that the money used to help poor communities adapt to climate change and find more sustainable ways to develop should come from the shipping industry which is currently untaxed – even though shipping contributes to 3% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

Listen to Ruth's story here: http://www.tearfund.org/en/get_involved/campaign/hunger/ and find out what you can do about it here: http://www.tearfund.org/en/get_involved/campaign/climatechange/shipping/.

The Church of England in partnership with Tearfund is leading the way in building a movement for climate justice. Join us at www.climatejusticefund.org to be part of it.

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