

Prayers led by Keith Brown, Essex FSB (Federation of Small Businesses)

Lord, let us today remember and pray for the 68,000 small businesses in our county, for those who own and manage them.

Let us give thanks for their expertise, knowledge and skills which are so vital to the success of our local economy and which create so many thousands of jobs for the people who live in our county.

Father, we ask you to:

- Provide them with the wisdom and courage to take the right decisions for the success of their business and which are fair for the people they employ.
- Enable them to provide the goods and services which consumers and fellow businesses need at a price they can afford and to a quality which is acceptable
- Guide those that work in our local businesses so they are loyal to their employers, supportive of their work colleagues and willing to share their own knowledge, skills and expertise to help drive the business forward.
- Help them create additional jobs which are sustainable, providing people of all ages with an opportunity to contribute to the prosperity of our county
- Encourage them to provide apprenticeships and staff training to help individuals develop their knowledge and skills so we make best use of the talents of all of our residents

Father, we ask you to guide those responsible for giving support to those business people and for creating the right climate for their success.

We pray especially:

- For our elected political leaders in Europe and in Westminster that you will guide them so they take the right decisions to make our economy a healthy one which encourages enterprise and the jobs it creates including reducing the unnecessary regulations and red tape which so often threatens to strangle small businesses, deterring them from growing and developing
- And in particular for the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne that you guide him as he makes preparations for the Budget he will deliver on Wednesday 23 March 2011, let him make the right choices so that the balance between reducing national debt and encouraging businesses to create jobs is the right one
- And here in Essex we ask that you guide our councillors, on Essex Council and the Borough, District, Parish and Town Councils across the county so the decisions they make are business friendly, supportive of economic growth and job creation
- That our leaders in any elected position put aside their political differences and work together for the benefit of the Essex economy and the businesses necessary for its success

We pray especially:

- For those who work and run the enterprise agencies and other business support agencies. We ask that you give them the knowledge they need to provide the right advice to those wishing to start their own business or expand their existing businesses.
- For those who work and run the recognised business organisations including the Federation of Small Businesses, the Chambers of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors. We ask you to guide them so the data and advice they give to our political leaders is the right data and advice to inform their decisions and encourages them to make the right choices in their policies.

We pray especially:

- For those who work in Government funded business support agencies such as Business Link whose works ends in November this year that they may find alternative employment which makes use of their skills and knowledge so they are not lost to the business community
- For those responsible for designing and developing the new business support services, we ask you to guide them to make the right decisions so that a service is developed which meets the needs of our entrepreneurs and business owners.
- For those involved in the Greater Essex, Kent and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership which brings together leaders from the private and public sector into an organisation whose aim is to deliver economic growth across that large area, may they put aside their geographical affiliations and differences and work in harmony for the benefit of the businesses served by the LEP.

We pray especially:

- For those involved in providing finance for businesses, particularly small businesses which have found it so difficult to cope with the recession.
- That individuals who have invested their redundancy payments, life savings or have mortgaged their family homes to raise finance for their business are rewarded for their courage and commitment
- That local bank managers be given the freedom to make decisions based on the viability of each individual business and the entrepreneurs running it rather than having to rely on computer driven check lists

We pray especially:

- That decisions taken elsewhere in the world which impact on Essex businesses and our local economy are the right ones

Lord we ask you to take these people in to your care, providing them with the knowledge and advice they need and helping them make the right decisions for our county.