



September 2009

Alpha 2009

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Every September we pray for the annual National Alpha Initiative.

Over 2 million people in the UK and 13 million worldwide have now attended an Alpha course. This course gives an opportunity to explore the meaning of life and is running in tens of thousands of churches of all denominations across the world.

Alpha is an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed setting over ten thought-provoking weekly sessions, with a day or weekend away.

Over 7,000 courses are currently running across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some courses are held during the day or lunch hour, most are evening courses.

Alpha courses are run in chaplaincies, gyms, prisons, offices, residential homes, universities, parent and toddler groups, youth clubs, armed forces bases and schools, and with the deaf, blind, foreign language groups and those who speak English as an additional language. We want to pray for these communities and the impact of Autumn Alpha suppers and courses that are planned.

We give thanks for:

- The effectiveness of Alpha over the years
- Every life that has been changed by attending the Alpha course
- The influence of Alpha abroad, in

prisons, in business with youth, within the media

We continue to pray for:

- Our community, our friends, neighbours and work colleagues
- The opportunity to invite them to a course.
- The congregations running these courses and their Alpha team.
- The people of Colchester; that every person is exposed to the power of the gospel and is given opportunity to respond.



'Alpha makes Christianity relevant to modern life'.
The Daily Express

Alpha

'Alpha has succeeded in many cases in turning faithful churchgoers from an inward focus on church work to an outward focus on evangelistic outreach...'

Christianity Today

'Christianity is becoming a minority faith in Europe, as church attendance falls, the clergy ages, and scandals and harsh doctrine drive people away. But the faith is reappearing — and thriving — in allsorts of unexpected places. A search for God in Europe.'

Time Magazine, 8 June 2003

Bob Russell MP

Bob Russell MP, Member of Parliament for Colchester would like to request prayer for the following issues.

Bob feels that the greatest issue that needs prayer is the provision of good quality and affordable housing. More people are in need of housing nationally, due to the rise in home repossessions.

Please pray for the families who don't have a good quality place to live, and the pressure this situation puts on them.

Soldiers based in Colchester will be serving again in Afghanistan by 2011. Please pray for their safety and wisdom for how they will be deployed.

Bob has been meeting people recently who work to help those addicted to drink or drugs. Please pray for people who are struggling with addiction, and who are in need.

Bob is interested in the CO1 youth café project, and the Abbeyfield Community Project. Please pray for the progress of these good projects.

Bob encourages us to give thanks for the blessings that we have.

He is thankful for the amazing medical treatment we can benefit from, such as hip replacement. He is also thankful for the work of many volunteers who serve the community, in organisations such as Scouts and Age Concern.

He is personally thankful for the birth of his first grand-daughter, who was born at Colchester Hospital last September.

Praying for your MP. Prayer groups are in place to support the MP from your constituency.

To pray for Bob Russell contact Jim Howard:

jim_viv.howard@ntlworld.com

If your constituency is North Colchester and you would like to pray for Bernard Jenkin contact Teresa Lasky:

teresa@lasky.co.uk

This is part of a Westminster initiative organised by Christians in Parliament.

Friends International

Praise for the:

- Lovely weather we have had and the good friendships formed during the July outing to Flatford and Dedham and the August outing to West Mersea! About 30 students attended both events.
- Families who have hosted students for a meal in their homes during Wednesday evenings in August.
- Number of students continuing to attend 'Chatterbox' at the English Language school on alternate Tuesdays during the summer.

Please pray for:

- More Christian people to volunteer to befriend students in the next

academic year. For more information about this please e-mail Michael and Caroline at frinco@essex.ac.uk or ring then on 825060. The planning of the winter programme.

- The work of the International Women's Society which we run every Thursday. Pray that this year there will be a good number of ladies attending.
- The Bible studies that they will continue to be well attended.
- Good health for all the volunteers

Thank you for praying, Joan Davies

Note: We are limited on advertising the work of Friends International on campus as we do

not have enough people willing to give a student an occasional meal or meet them for coffee. Some may like to give them a little outing, and keep in touch with them during their time at the University of Essex. Please prayerfully consider being involved!

Advance notice:

**Saturday October 31st
'Honoured Guests' at
Greenstead Free Church from
7pm. - 9.30pm.**

**All who are interested in
working with International
students or who would like to
just see what we do are invited!**

Maturity

....that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured..... Col 4:12

'I believe God has been speaking about spiritual maturity. I offer this to you for your prayer, reflection and feedback.

God wants us to mature! It may seem that some of the things we once trusted in emotionally, spiritually, or depended on structurally or financially have been stripped from us.

I suggest that the challenges we face as we seek to support people, to be salt and light to society, demand that we find God in a deeper way than ever before.

Yet so often instead of finding God afresh at these times we cling on to what we own, that which we know, formulas that have worked in the past. And some that didn't work the first time round!

I believe God is working to mature us, our values and what motivates us. Our motivation and values need to be rooted in a deep understanding of who God is, and what he is about in our day.

We need to mature in our exploration and understanding of scripture. Having a healthy questioning of what we have always 'known' and open to fresh revelations and understanding of the nature of God.

We need to mature by taking responsibility for our own spirituality, standing alongside each other in true relationship that challenges, asks the

uncomfortable questions and commit to spur one another on.

Prayer for ourselves—

Repentance for:

- Immature attitudes
- Stubbornness
- Self preservation
- Dependence on things other than God
- Being closed minded, being so sure of what we 'know' we stop being open to Gods leading
- Having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof

Pray especially for the letting go of disappointments, especially those rooted in the wrong understanding of the nature of God, so increasing unbelief in our experience.

Pray for;

- A new way of being, a new posture before God
- Transformed lives as we have our minds renewed
- Fresh hunger for God,
- Desire for fresh revelation though scripture

Pray for the church—

Repentance for:

- Wanting to know *about* God rather than know Him
- Lack of intimacy with the father
- Spiritual stagnation
- Areas of blindness about where God is moving and how
- Self preservation

Pray for:

- Fresh boldness in our

relationship with God

- Renewed passion for Jesus
- Breaking of old mindsets that hold us captive to unbelief, cynicism, and fruitless lives
- Courage to allow this new day to dawn over us!

May God lead us from immaturity to maturity in Jesus name. Amen"
Teresa Lasky

Scriptures to help us pray:
Hebrews 5:11 - 14, James 1: 2-5

Colchester Food Bank

Prayer meeting at St Margaret's Church, 1st September

7.45 pm - Coffee

8.00 – 9.00 pm - Prayer

Launch at Town Hall

7th September at 2.00 p.m.

Do come if you can and let as many people as you can know that it is happening.

We plan to hold the first two food bank distributions on 7th November (10.00 a.m. to 12 noon at St. Margaret's) and 5th December (10.00 a.m. to 12 noon at St Matthew's).

We will soon to be sending out appeals to churches and school asking if they would consider donating their Harvest Festival collections to the Food Bank.

Brian Ford

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday 5th September

8.30 am - 10 am

St Margaret's Church ,
Stansted Road (off Mersea Road), CO2 8RA

Out for Good

Thanks to DNA Networks, Frontier Trusts Out4Good Project moved into a new house in July, and are directly accommodating three young men with a fourth joining us in September. Briefly we operated from two houses in the town, and currently have 20 young men who we are involved with, having worked with a total of 34. Some we see on a very regular basis others less so.

Three of the lads do not live in the Colchester area, with one as far afield as Bournemouth, and we have regular contact with him via text, phone calls and emails.

Since February we have been pleased to have Katy Smith working with us for a day of week and are delighted that Katy and Richard are expecting their first baby in September. Katy has been a real asset to the project and her insights, advice and experience as well as support for the lads she has been involved with, has been first class and we will miss her input whilst she takes maternity leave and considers her future. However, now there will be a gap in the project that needs filling.

We are thankful for the support that DNA Networks continues to give to Out4Good which is a mission unit of the church, and for the support of the Colchester Boiler-room, however we would welcome a wider church interest and involvement from across the town.

We are also very thankful for the reduction in offending we have seen and a reduction in drug abuse.....so the outcome of that, which is hard to quantify, is a reduction in the number of victims.

Our close links to the Keep Team and Essex Police and Probation Service continues and we regularly receive referrals from them.

We are currently writing bids to secure more funding which is proving difficult to obtain in the present economic climate and we are interested to talk to any potential supporters who could offer resources or advice in the forming of a business that could provide employment for the lads in some capacity, as well as ensure some financial stability to the project, which to date has not received any government money or funds from the Local Borough. Short term funding for the project has been via the Jerusalem Trust, Lankelly Chase, Anchor foundation and Mercers. We are pleased and grateful to have received this funding but the long term future of the project requires a more sustainable source of income.

We are tentatively considering launching a business [DNA Enterprises] that will provide a decorating/cleaning/gardening service to local landlords and letting agencies. We have already completed one 'pilot' three days for a local agent who was very pleased with the work we undertook and has promised us more for the future.

Our prayer requests beyond resourcing would be for more people across the town and churches to become involved in the project, in mentoring, general volunteering particularly around organising recreational activities such as football, fishing, going to the gym etc, and for volunteering opportunities for the lads to get

involved with.

So our plans for the future hopefully will be seeing a wider community supporting the project, and a business set up that could provide the lads with some meaningful occupation, as well as the continued need for good accommodation for the lads to live in whilst they attempt to.

If you require any further information or details of the project then please call Pete Hope on 07941019750 or email Hopeboy291@aol.com

Lifehouse - previously Gosbecks Christian Fellowship, are planning an exhibition of artwork and creativity towards the end of October. The event will be used as an outreach and will include opportunities for visitors to explore their own creative giftings.

As part of this event we will need about half a dozen display boards and would love to hear from anyone who might have some we could borrow. We will arrange for collection and return of the boards and will of course take great care of them. Please contact Sally Stephenson on 01206 510967 or via: sally.stephenson20@ntlworld.com

Please visit our website

www.colchesterprayernet.co.uk

To contact Teresa Lasky please phone 01206 242235 or email teresa@lasky.co.uk

For admin enquiries or to contribute to next month's prayer guide contact marie@colchesterprayernet.co.uk

Feedback and Town News

Prayer at Tesco

"This is indeed an amazing opportunity which the Lord has given us and we pray that use it will be used to draw people into His kingdom. With the kind permission of the store manager since April trained teams of Christians from St John's and St Luke's churches have been outside Highwoods' Tesco each Saturday 10 -12 am offering healing prayer. They hand out explanatory leaflets to anyone who wants to take one. There is music playing, a large 'Healing ' sign displayed and chairs set out outside the store entrance for those who want to receive prayer.

There has been a good response with testimonies of God's healing and blessing on those receive prayer. In addition, those who minister have been greatly encouraged and testify to a great sense of God's presence in the small area where this prayer happens".

Gillian, St Luke's, Highwoods

Sanctum - Prayer Rooms in Schools

Here is some encouraging feedback from the prayer rooms held in the summer term.

Colchester Royal Grammar School

"Well, it's been quite a week with students making over 500 visits to Sanctum in lessons, break time and lunch time. By the end of the week we were getting to know some regulars who kept returning to spend time in the room.

What have been the highlights?
For me its the stories of change

that have been shared by students at the end of the lessons. After asking which were their favourite activities we invited them to say why.

Time and time again, unprompted by us or by others, many of them would tell how an activity had really helped them. It is my hope and prayer that many of these students will, next week, remember the experience and reflect once again on their lives and the whisper of God who calls to them through the diversity of life's experiences that Sanctum taps into.

The Gilbert

It has been a most wonderful week. Students have made just over 700 visits to Sanctum during lessons, break times and lunch times and we have been humbled daily by their openness and honesty as the various activities give them an opportunity to reflect on their lives. They, in turn, have been so grateful for Sanctum. As I have previously noted, many have dealt with things from their past and have spoken of a sense of release and of moving on.

Our prayer is that these brief spiritual moments will inspire a lasting difference in their lives. In the lessons one of our concluding challenges to them has been to take their experiences at Sanctum and try to integrate them into their daily lives.

So, here are a few things our visitors had to say today, and below that some of my favourite images of the day.

- *It is good to encourage youngsters to think about spiritual things. (A teacher)*
- *Thank you. I can let go.*

And the last comment in the book:

I really enjoyed coming here. It made me realise that anyone can be special. I'm so glad that Sanctum came to our school. Thanks"

**Tim Abbott
CYO**

A Passion for Life.

"A Passion for life is a nationwide Mission.

Prayer Points:

- For local parish churches to have a renewed focus upon prayer to recover confidence that God will be at work in the Mission of our churches.
- To re-connect with unbelievers in our communities.
- Through a Passion for Life – God's purposes of redeeming a great multi-cultural people for life in his Son, by stirring up local churches across the country to work together in numerous mission initiatives that climax in March 2010 for his glory alone.
- That Easter 2010 will be a time when many people come to hear the marvellous news of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

- That the Holy Spirit would transform the way we think about our churches, evangelism, and the world around us"

James Knowles, All Saints Fordham

www.apassionforlife.org.uk