



a tea  
service  
by Helen Garton



**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

# A fair trade tea service

Tea is vitally important to the livelihoods of more than 20 million people across the developing world. How often do we think about them when we make – or drink – a cup of tea? Does our choice of favourite cuppa contribute to their wellbeing – or not?

The idea behind this service is to make tea the focus of the worship from the start, rather than serve it afterwards as often happens.

The theme of this year's Fairtrade Fortnight is "The Big Swap" and to start people thinking about how they might swap the familiar for the new, the service begins where worship often ends, with a blessing, and ends where services normally start, with a call to worship and to action.

**Part of the action will involve the Make It Fair campaign leaflets, so make sure you have plenty of these leaflets - and some pens for people to fill them in.**

You may also find it useful to download a copy of the booklet: *The People Behind Your Cuppa*. You'll find it at [www.traidcraft.org.uk/churchresources](http://www.traidcraft.org.uk/churchresources)

Have some fun with this service! If at all possible, it would be good to serve tea as part of the service so you will need to think about the layout of the worship space: e.g. with people sitting round tables. You might also want to offer fair trade coffee and biscuits, etc.

## Help support our work

Please consider taking up a special offering to support the work of our charity Traidcraft Exchange.

Collection envelopes (ref: 51520) and collection boxes (ref: 50588) are available from 0191 497 6445

**Remember!** Gift Aid can add an extra 28p to every £1 you donate!

**This service has been written specially for us by Helen Garton, of the United Reformed Church.**

**As well as being an ordained minister and a widely published creator of worship resources, Helen has also worked in the tea industry.**

## Blessing:

Blessed are you, Creator God of each and every age,  
Whose presence brooded over the face of the waters,  
Drawing order out of chaos at the dawn of time.

Let us bless the Lord:

**Thanks be to God.**

Blessed are you, Saviour God of this and every generation,

Whose presence brought forgiveness and love,  
Making us anew in your image.

Let us bless the Lord:

**Thanks be to God.**

Blessed are you, Sustaining God of ours and every moment,

Whose presence breathes new life into us,  
Refreshing us with the fire of your spirit.

Let us bless the Lord:

**Thanks be to God.**

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Bless us now in this time and place. **Amen.**

## Hymn/song

### Prayers of intercession:

As we purchase our next packet of tea...  
Make us mindful of those whose livelihoods depend on us:

The farmers, planters and pickers,  
The packers, dealers and merchants,  
The transporters, blenders, shop assistants and  
supermarket owners.

Let it be for us a matter of simple justice and fair trade.

We pray especially for... (*mention local shops and retailers*).

As we drink from our next cup...

Make us mindful of the many places with whom we share this brew:

From China, Sri Lanka and India,  
From Kenya, Malawi and Indonesia,  
From the past and the present.

Let it be for us a matter of simple justice and fair trade.

We pray especially for... (*mention some of the producers on these pages or those in The People Behind Your Cuppa... leaflet*).



### Adriano's story

The fair wage tea plucker Adriano Kalili, receives means he has been able to build a three-bedroom house for his wife, Alizeta, and their three children – and the Fairtrade premium has helped to provide the roof.

“I have built my house using money from tea plucking,” said Adriano, who has worked for Kibena Tea in southern Tanzania since 1996.

“It is made from mud bricks. The Kibena Tea Fair Trade Fund have given me iron sheets to roof my house.”

Adriano is just one of many workers whose homes have been improved through the provision of iron sheeting for their roofs.

Working at Kibena means he is able to pay the school fees for his daughter, Adela, and help with the cost of schooling two orphaned relatives too.

“I would like to improve the lives of my children,” he said.

“I would like them to go to secondary school and higher education, so they can work in a good position.”

As we take time to share our next tea break together...

Make us mindful of the times when we have sat down and chatted:

Sharing in friendship,  
Pouring out our hurts,  
And enjoying a laugh.

Let it be for us a matter of simple justice and fair trade.

We pray especially for those known to us who need our prayers at this time... (*silent or open prayer*)

**Amen.**

## Hymn/Song

## Offertory

Our worship, our love,  
Our lives, our actions,  
Our service, our offerings;  
We dedicate all to you.

**Amen.**

## Reading: Luke 19:1-10

### Zacchaeus the Tax Collector:

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" "

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."



Photo: Shailan Parker

## Siji's story

Siji Jose wants to provide a good future for her three children – that's why she takes great care over the tea she grows on her small farm in Kerala, India.

Selling her tea on Fairtrade terms through the Sahyadri Farmers Consortium helps her to get a good price for the tea, which means she can send her children to school and put food on the family table.

"I've been growing tea for 10 years," she said. "The main benefit now is that I am getting a good price – before it was very poor."

Having her fields close to her home helps her to fit farming, household work and looking after her family into her working day. But she also plays an important role in helping other women farmers to have a voice – and make sure that the Fairtrade premium on the tea is well-spent.

Siji is unit secretary of the Women's Development Wing, which meets regularly and gives women tea farmers an opportunity to exchange knowledge and express their views. They also administer the Fairtrade premium in their area.

On Sundays, Siji and her family attend St Sebastian's RC Church, where many of her neighbouring tea farmers also worship.

"My church life is important to me," she said. "I am a Sunday School teacher and I am teaching Standard One."

## Sermon: How long does it take to make a cup of tea?

The next time you go to the kitchen to boil the kettle and make yourself a brew, spare a thought for the humble cup of tea! The custom of drinking tea goes back 3,000 years (that's 500 years before the birth of Abraham) to the Chinese Emperor Shen Hung, when some leaves fell into his cup of boiling water.

Fast forward to the end of the fifth century and tea makes its way to Turkey. A century after that it arrives in Japan. But it is not until the end of the sixteenth century that Europeans discover tea, thanks to Jesuit priests bringing it back home with them.

Half a century after that, in 1657, the first cup of tea is sold in London... in Garway's Coffee House! Tea parties became so popular across all social classes that religious reformers called (unsuccessfully) for a ban! It was only when tea taxes were introduced in the reign of Charles II that the consumption of tea slumped, meaning that only the very wealthy could afford the luxury.

Let's also not forget the East India Company which monopolised British tea imports. Although the East India Company was not directly engaged in the transatlantic slave trade, the link was very close and highly profitable.

Then there was the Boston Tea party in America, with colonists protesting against the duty imposed on tea and other goods imported into the British colonies, and this localised rebellion soon escalated into the American Revolution. Spare a thought for the humble cup of tea which has been responsible for so much injustice and violence in its time.

In 1835 the first tea plantations were started in India, in Assam. A century later we find it grown in Sumatra, Indonesia, Kenya and other parts of Africa. How long does it take to make a cup of tea? Around 5,000 years, during which time it spread right around the world. So spare a thought for the humble cup of tea and give thanks for Thomas Sullivan, the tea importer who accidentally invented tea bags when he sent tea in silk bags to some undiscerning clients who put the whole thing into their tea pots. God bless him!

How many people does it take to make a cup of tea?

The next time you make yourself a brew, spare a thought for all the people who are responsible for your cuppa. There are the farmers and workers, many of whom work for long hours, doing physically demanding work for low pay. Then there are the merchants, traders, importers, buyers, blenders, transporters and retailers... all taking their share along the way. If you are a small-scale producer you have little power to negotiate a fair price in the face of the gigantic international tea trade, mass producers and price variations in the global market.

Tell the story of some of *The People Behind Your Cuppa*:

Ruth, the small-scale farmer in Kenya;

Foster, from southern Malawi, who has been farming tea for 30 years;

Ben Uman or Joan, the tea-pickers in Kenya;

Ibu Tati, the tea-picker in Indonesia;

Karapagam, who works on the United Nilgiri Tea Estate in South India;

Adriano Kalili, a tea-picker in Tanzania, who is now paid a fair wage.

In the UK alone, we drink 165 million cups of tea every day and we are the third largest tea importer in the world. Yet only one cup in every ten is fairly traded. Traidcraft has been selling tea and working directly with small-scale tea producers for almost 30 years.

How many people does it take to make a cup of tea? More than 20 million people in the developing world depend on the tea industry for their livelihood. Our choices can help determine how well that livelihood provides for them, their families and their communities.

What does it mean to thirst for justice?

Of course, there is no mention of tea in our scriptures, but there are plenty of references to meals and sharing in fellowship... and there are plenty of references to the life-giving properties of water! The story of Zaccheus highlights the unacceptability of being part of the injustice meted out to those who depend on us.

Zaccheus was a man ruled by his pocket and not his conscience. It is his encounter with Jesus which makes the difference, when Jesus invited himself back to the family home. (Remember the song “Zaccheus was a very little man...”? Some versions also include the line “... because I’m coming to your house for tea!”).

The two gestures speak louder than words. In one, Jesus flies in the face of popular opinion to give Zacchaeus a chance to make the change. In the other, Zacchaeus recognises the error of his former ways and makes amends by promising restitution to the poor and needy whom he had previously exploited. Two good deeds may not cancel out the wrong, but it is a start.

How many people does it take to thirst for justice? One – each one of us! We can make a huge difference just by making the simple switch to fair trade tea, coffee, biscuits, pasta, rice.... Zacchaeus found that he could not live with himself after his encounter with Jesus by continuing in his old ways. How then can we live with the taste of injustice, knowing that others are not given a fair wage for their labours or a fair price for their produce? Justice begins with us, our churches, our communities, our supermarkets and our governments.

So, spare a thought for the humble cuppa – it can teach us an important lesson!

## Hymn/song

### Talk: *Make it Fair*

Say a little bit about *Make It Fair*. Traidcraft is working to make every cup of tea drunk in the UK Fairtrade because Fairtrade is the only system that guarantees producers a minimum price for their tea, and gives an extra premium payment for investment in their community.

Together, the UK’s top five tea brands account for 72% of the market. If just one of them switched to Fairtrade it would make a real difference to the lives of thousands of farmers and workers. Let’s add our voice to those calling on the big tea companies to go Fairtrade!

Encourage everyone to fill in one of *Make It Fair* cards and to sign the five company letters, then collect all the booklets in a large envelope addressed to:

Traidcraft  
FREEPOST NT972  
KINGSWAY  
GATESHEAD  
TYNE AND WEAR  
NE11 ONE



Photo: James Chimpweya.

### Joan’s story

The life of a tea worker is often insecure and precarious. Women, particularly, can be left feeling powerless and vulnerable and many of them tell stories of sexual harassment and exploitation.

Joan is a tea picker in Kenya. She tells of how her supervisor demanded sexual favours in return for lighter duties and fair treatment.

“If you refuse then there are a lot of ways for them to frustrate you,” she says. “They may make you stay to sort the leaves at the end of the day, or they will tell you that the tea you have picked is bad. Or maybe they will say you have picked less than you have.”

Fairtrade certification cannot stamp out this sort of harassment overnight but it does require the democratic representation of workers in the decision-making process. Many women say they are more confident about speaking out to defend their rights as a result.

## Drama: *More Tea, Vicar?*

This can be performed while people are filling out the cards.

You will need three signs: 'No Fairtrade (logo): No Comment!', 'Tea House' and 'Teatime Café'; a desk for the Tea House and a table with a table cloth and cups, saucers, tea pot, etc. for the Teatime Café.

There is a cast of four: shopkeeper, waiter/ress, steward and a minister or church "worthy."

### Scene 1: In the Tea House:

- Shopkeeper: Good morning, can I help you.
- Minister: Yes, I'd like to buy some tea please.
- Shopkeeper: [*sounding a bit know-it-all*] Certainly, we have: Black tea, green tea, white tea and oolong...
- Minister: Ooh-what?
- Shopkeeper: Oolong... [*sounding dismissive*]  
Then there's Assam, Breakfast, Ceylon, Darjeeling, and Earl Grey tea. Or you could try Jasmine, Keemun, Rooibos, Orange Pekoe, Lapsang Souchong, or Gunpowder.
- Minister: Gunpowder, are you serious?
- Shopkeeper: Yes. Would you be after First Flush [*Minister shakes his/her head*]... Second Flush... no?... just plain, boring tea, huh?
- Minister: No, actually I was after some Fairtrade tea... I don't suppose you have any Fairtrade varieties?
- Shopkeeper: [*looking sheepish*] No, I'm afraid not, sorry.
- Minister: Shame. [*holding up FT sign, encouraging congregation to join in*]. No Fairtrade, no comment!

### Scene 2: in the Teatime Café:

- Waiter/ress: Good afternoon, can I take your order?
- Minister: Yes, I'd love a cup of tea.
- Waiter/ress: Certainly, we have a wide selection
- Minister: [*groan*] Just an ordinary cup of tea, please.
- Waiter/ress: Would you like a mug or a cup?
- Minister: Cup, please.
- Waiter/ress: One cup or a teapot?
- Minister: Pot, please.
- Waiter/ress: Loose leaf tea or teabag?
- Minister: Don't mind... umm... teabag.
- Waiter/ress: Square, round or pyramid teabag?
- Minister: How about a simple cup of Fairtrade tea, however it comes!
- Waiter/ress: Oooo... Fairtrade, don't think we stock that.
- Minister: Shame. [*holding up FT sign, encouraging congregation to join in*]. No Fairtrade, no comment!

### Scene 3: After church:

Steward: [laughing] More tea, vicar?  
Minister: Oh yes, please... needn't ask, need I?  
Steward: No, it's all Fairtrade. You know what we say here:  
Minister: Shame. [holding up FT sign, encouraging congregation to join in]. No Fairtrade, no comment!  
[to congregation] Isn't it time you made the swap?

## Confession: Psalm 103 (Celebrating Common Prayer)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.  
He forgives all your sins and heals all your infirmities;  
He redeems your life from the grave and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;  
He satisfies you with good things, and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.  
The Lord executes righteousness and judgement for all who are oppressed.  
He made his ways known to Moses and his works to the children of Israel.  
The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.  
He will not always accuse us, nor will he keep his anger for ever.  
He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.  
As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for those who fear him.  
For he himself knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust.  
Our days are like the grass; we flourish like a flower of the field;  
When the wind goes over it, it is gone, and its place shall know it no more.  
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever on those who fear him, and his righteousness on children's children;  
On those who keep his covenant and remember his commandments and do them.  
The Lord has set his throne in heaven, and his kingship has dominion over all.  
Bless the Lord, you angels of his, you mighty ones who do his bidding, and harken to the voice of his word.  
Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you ministers of his who do his will.  
Bless the Lord, all you works of his, in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul.

## Hymn/Song

### Call to worship through action

Plough new ground for yourselves, plant righteousness, and reap the blessings that your devotion to me will produce.

It is time for you to turn to me, your Lord, and I will come and pour out blessings upon you.

Hosea 10:12 (GNB)

# More ways to get involved

**Refreshments account:** Open a Traidcraft Refreshments account for your church. Easy ordering via the web, telephone or post; up to £200 of credit; free carriage on all orders over £50. Download an application form at [www.traidcraft.co.uk/refreshments](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/refreshments) or call 0870 444 1543.

**Become a Fair Trader:** Make a real difference to the lives of the poor by selling Traidcraft products in your church. With a turnover of only £500 a year you will enjoy between 10-15% discount and extended credit. Download an application form at [www.traidcraft.co.uk/fairtrader](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/fairtrader) email [fairtrader@traidcraft.co.uk](mailto:fairtrader@traidcraft.co.uk) or call 0870 444 1543.

**Mail order/online:** Browse the UK's largest range of fair trade products on our top-rated website and in our awardwinning catalogue. Go to [www.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk) or order your copy of the catalogue on 0191 491 0591.

**Support Traidcraft Exchange:** Traidcraft Exchange is the UK's leading development charity devoted exclusively to fighting poverty through trade. Your support is vital to our work. To make a donation and to find out more about different ways you can give, visit [www.traidcraft.org.uk/giving](http://www.traidcraft.org.uk/giving) or call 0191 497 6445.

**Buy a 'Gift for Life':** 'Gifts for Life' are alternative gifts that will bring joy to a friend or relative and transform the lives of people living in poverty who are working to build better lives through trade. Go to [www.giftsforlife.org](http://www.giftsforlife.org) to find out how.

**Join in a fundraising event** for Traidcraft Exchange: Visit [www.traidcraft.org.uk/events](http://www.traidcraft.org.uk/events) to find out more about our fundraising events.

**Campaign with us:** Unjust trade rules and practices keep millions trapped in poverty. Get your church involved in Traidcraft campaigns - and help change the way the world trades. Go to [www.traidcraft.co.uk/campaign](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/campaign)

**Book a speaker:** Traidcraft has a nationwide network of speakers who can enthuse your group with a fascinating presentation on the latest developments in fair trade. Call 0191 497 6418 or e-mail [speakers@traidcraft.co.uk](mailto:speakers@traidcraft.co.uk)

**Online resources:** Worship resources, preaching notes, briefing papers - you'll find them and more at [www.traidcraft.co.uk/church](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/church)

**Meet The People Tours:** Want to see at firsthand the positive impact fair trade is making? Meet some Traidcraft producers and experience a holiday that will be "totally different from anything you have done before." To request a brochure or find out more call 0870 444 1774 or go to [www.traidcraft-tours.com](http://www.traidcraft-tours.com)

However you choose to support us, we're very grateful. Thank you!



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