

Give Up Ten

Week 5 - Ena's Story



Faith Without Works

Reading James 2

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Surely that faith cannot save, can it? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷ So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Reflection

Ena had a happy childhood, worked as a civil servant, was married and had a little boy. She had no idea where her life would take her. But in a few short years she faced grief, divorce, debt and bankruptcy, and unable to buy food she visited a food bank.

She says; "I came to the food bank, I still had my car and I was well dressed. As I entered the building I overheard people say - 'what is she doing here?' That's why it is so important to me that people don't judge a book by their cover. We never know what is going on in someone's life, behind closed doors."

A few years later Ena volunteered at a food bank near her hometown in Scotland. The same principles were really important to her. "People need to know that there is a place to go where they can talk. A place where they won't be judged and people won't cast aspersions."

For Ena that is what Christianity is all about. "We need to approach people with humbleness and really honour every person," she says. "What we do as Christians is more important than what we believe or say."

And because what we do is important, for Ena, that makes it key to work with people from different faiths and beliefs. "It is important that people can be themselves, whatever they believe and whatever they are going through," she says. "For me though, when I felt most alone, it was the church I could go to and feel at home."

Questions

Have you ever been judged on your appearance? How did it make you feel?

Does your church feel like home for people? Are there things that you could do to ensure all people could feel at home in your church?

Prayer

God of welcome

We thank you for the people who serve others,
seeing them with eyes of love,
Offering shelter, food and a cup of tea.

God of dignity

We thank you for the people who love the neighbour as themselves,
seeing them with eyes that do not judge
Offering kindness, compassion and words that soothe.

God who shapes us

Help us to see your image in every person we meet.

Give us the patience to pay attention to stories that are not often told.

Give us the discernment to see behind forced smiles, smart clothes and brave faces

And give us more love to share with everyone who crosses our path.

Amen.

One of the examples James gives is about giving food to people who cannot afford to buy the essentials they need. We are so grateful for all the volunteers and staff in food banks who are on the frontline, ensuring people do not face hunger alone. But the need for food donations to food banks is more urgent than ever, as the cost of living crisis worsens, and more and more food banks are having to buy extra food to support the people who are referred to them.

If you're able to, could you consider donating extra food or toiletries to your local food bank this week? You might also want to speak to your friends or church community about how they can help too. [Find out how to donate food](#)