

## **Mid-week reflection     Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Have you ever tramped around the streets collecting for Christian Aid? It's one of those things that seems very daunting and yet when you come to knock on doors it's nowhere near as bad as you expected it to be - and sometimes it's even enjoyable! A time to catch up with neighbours on their doorsteps and even forge friendships with people further down the street.

Well, this year we won't be collecting house to house again, so we'll all be relieved of that job, but it also means that we won't have the opportunity to witness to our communities. To make it known that we care about our friends and neighbours throughout the world, that we take seriously Jesus' command to 'love one another as I have loved you.' And that simple act of collecting is an outpouring of that love, one that holds a hand out to our friends – friends that we will never see and never know.

Jesus' command to love one another is from John 15:9-17 and it was the gospel reading on Sunday. Looking again at that passage, it struck me that it fits Christian Aid week down to a tee. It talks about love and it talks about friends – Jesus said 'you are my friends if you do what I command you.'

So, what is a friend? We have so many different circles of friends. A group of friends at work, another group at church, yet another group that we meet at a club of some sort, old school friends and yes, even family – although the saying goes that you choose your friends but not your family! We share something in common with all of them, the job that we do or the hobby that we follow. Some friendships are deep and long lasting; some come and go, while some friendships survive over a telephone line. Other friends we will never meet, they only come into our lives because of a shared cause or campaign – they may be scattered all over the country or even the world. But what all our friendships share in common is that we care for our friends, we care about them, we are interested in them and we want the best for them. In fact, we love them.

So, what would the perfect friend be? If we played 'Build a Friend' I'm sure we would all come up with some fantastic qualities of what that friend should be like; kind, caring, compassionate, funny, reliable, willing to put themselves out for something that they believe in. In fact, they would have all the gifts of the spirit. The list goes on and on, and I'm sure that you could add to it and we would each build a slightly different model. But the friendships that Jesus wants us to have - in fact he commanded us to have - when he said 'love one another as I have loved you' aren't just the cosy friendship groups that we have made ourselves. He means friendships that cost us something, that take us out of our comfort zone, that compel us to do something for

people who may live lives completely different to our own and share none of our interests - and yet still they are our friends because they are God's children and are loved by God too.

This Christian Aid week we have the chance to reach out in partnership to friends across the world whom we will never meet. To people living in poverty on the frontline of climate chaos; to people like Rose Katanu who is battling a climate crisis that she herself did not create. Our role in this friendship is to be part of the call for climate justice by campaigning, by making lifestyle changes, and yes, by giving money so our Christian Aid partners overseas can work alongside Rose to improve the life of her community here and now, and to make lasting changes for the future.

We are friends of Jesus if we do what he commands, and that command is quite simply to love one another as he loves us.

If you would like to make a donation to the work of Christian Aid to help our friends across the world, there are envelopes in our churches and you will recently have received one in the paper mailing - or you can take advantage of technology and make an online donation by clicking on the envelope on the [halasteam.org](http://halasteam.org) website.



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