



Update No 11: 7 July 2013

Hi, everyone.

I know that most of my communications with you have concerned themselves with the progress of the project. However, there have been two recent personal experiences that have spoken to me about why we run the Foodbank. I would like to share these with you.

Firstly, last week at our session in Eltham, I was busy moving boxes from the upstairs store down to the welcome centre. As I was doing so I noticed one of our volunteers talking with a young man who seemed quite distressed. I continued my work. After a few moments the volunteer spoke to me and said, "Can you help this man". I sat down with Paul and listened to his story.

Up to the previous few months he had been employed, he had his own place to live in which he was comfortable and settled. He had some debts but nothing he could not manage. He was happy and content. Then he lost his job. Out of a feeling of self-respect and wishing to retain his sense of self-worth he set about finding a new job determined to be successful. Unfortunately, he underestimated just how difficult this would be but undeterred he pushed on. Soon his money ran out, he built up an overdraft and he could no longer pay his rent. Against everything he wanted he gave up his home and decided to resort to the benefit system. The impact on him emotionally was catastrophic. By the time he visited us you could say that he was a broken man.

As I listened to Paul something rose up in me saying, "This man needs your help". We continued to talk and we settled on a plan to refer him to those who could help. When he was ready to leave you could visibly see hope returning to his face and his stature, as he went out the door Paul turned to the volunteer and asked her name. Then said, "it is the name of an angel who saved my life". Paul promised to come back to tell us how his story ended.

Secondly, yesterday I spent the day collecting food at Tesco in Woolwich. There had already been a successful day on Friday. We had a great team, including some Tesco staff members, who worked tirelessly all day encouraging customers to donate food to us from our shopping list. The enthusiasm and energy on a hot and sticky day was remarkable.

But, what was even more remarkable, was the generosity of the public. There were hundreds of people who brought something to fill our trollies. Frequently people approached us with a bag full of items and every now and then someone came with a trolley load. So many stopped to encourage us, some to thank us and some even to volunteer. Tesco created a good environment and gave us huge support (not forgetting their 30% top-up), but it was the unselfish response of the public that impressed and encouraged me the most. Tesco are delivering the collection to the warehouse tomorrow which presents us with the next challenge to get it in and sorted.

I know I should not be surprised to see God's hand at work not only in the project but also in the lives of those that the Foodbank touches, but it still excites me to see Him at work.

Thank you for your support and prayers, keep tuned there is more exciting news in the pipeline!

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