



Celebrating giving

We like to celebrate giving and the difference it can make in our world, in our churches and in the lives of one another.

In each stewardship e-newsletter we will be asking someone from Cumbria to share about what God has taught them about generosity. This time we have asked Sophie Hodge. [Click here](#) to read more.

“God has taught me that giving is about a lot of things...

Sometimes, for me, giving is about mercy. I try hard to not just walk past a homeless person in the streets. I will usually stop and either buy a Big Issue; purchase a latte for them or pop into a nearby supermarket and head back with some food and drink. How has that person become homeless? Is it because they are a tragic victim of circumstance? Or have they simply made very poor life decisions? I can't know, but for me it doesn't matter. My gift of a sandwich is just a small act of compassion, recognising that I too am a fallen, broken person, trying to bring a tiny bit of light into another human beings' life. Giving is an act of mercy, as I try to follow a God of mercy.

At other times, for me, giving is about hospitality... My husband and I love creating spaces where people feel a sense of community, love and acceptance. In a country where over 9 million people claim to suffer from loneliness, we cannot underestimate how precious this gift can be. Hospitality is about sharing our very lives with one another: our food, our homes, our time, all of it. It's an act of walking alongside, as I try to follow a God who became incarnate in Jesus and walked alongside us.

And almost all the time, for me, giving is about trying to change the world... I see the poverty and injustice in the world, and I want to scream. How to begin to make a difference can feel overwhelming. But the simple fact is, money makes the world go around. I am in the privileged position of having some money spare. So, my money can make a difference in the most desperate situations. In places I cannot be myself. It can bring light and hope to people leading dark and hopeless lives. What a privilege to be able to make a difference to 30 AIDs orphans in a Children's Home (orphanage) I support in Malawi. One young girl was found trying to scavenge food out of bins next to a school, before she joined the home. Another two brothers in the home were street children in a nearby town. A 7-year-old girl joined the home last month, after losing both her parents and running away from a home where she was being abused by her sister-in-law. My finances have helped change the world for those children - even though there are another 10 million children in Malawi I haven't been able to help. In Malawi, only 25% of children graduate from primary school to secondary school, and very few of those 25% are girls. This September, 3 girls from the Children's Home started secondary school. My giving is an act of changing the world, as I try to follow a God who was so determined to change the world, he was willing to die on a cross”.