

TFTD L18 You were doing it to me!

Wednesday 30th March

Many thanks to Karen Drury for today's TFTD. Karen is Reader in training at St John's High Legh, and will be with us on placement over the next few weeks.



This week's theme for Thought for the Day is SERVICE.

Matthew 25:37-40

³⁷ "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

⁴⁰ "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, ^[c] you were doing it to me!'

This weekend past, I have also attended the Lay Conference at Swanwick. In case you were wondering, a lay person is a person in the church who is not a member of the formal clergy – taken at its widest definition, pretty much all of us, then!

One of the talks touched on the meaning of service. I have been wondering about the definition of that word pretty much since then.

Service. It brings to mind a few things:

- Something the church holds on a Sunday morning
- The opening gambit in a tennis match
- Being part of a trained body designed to defend our country as part of the armed forces,

Another use of the word 'service' that sticks out for me currently occurs on the BBC TV show, 'The Great British Menu', as chefs from around the country compete to get a course to a grand banquet. When they are ready and prepared, they call, 'Service, please!'

They are ready to go. This is a deliberate, definite and almost regimented act of cooking food to be served to another. The dishes have been prepared with passion, care and attention to detail. The expectation is that it will be savoured, enjoyed and appreciated. If it is not and the judges or celebrity professional chef don't like it, there is a huge sense of disappointment for the chef responsible for the dish; even in some cases, a sense of humiliation, to say nothing of a sense of rejection.

I wonder sometimes, if that is what makes us shy away from doing something for others? Are we afraid that, somehow, whatever it is that we thought we might do might not be 'good enough', might not be received well, will fall short, be rejected?

It is then that we must continue to bear in mind Jesus' words, '...you were doing it to me!' (Matthew 25:40)

During the talk at the Lay Conference, I learned that the Greek word for 'service' can also mean 'worship'. This would imply that every time we do almost anything for someone else, it can be interpreted as an act of worship.

We talk about 'Acts of Service' as being something significant and huge. And sometimes that is the case. But often, for us, in our everyday lives, it can be something very small: opening a door for someone who is heavy-laden, talking to the person on the checkout at the coffee shop or garden centre, allow someone to pull out in front of us at a road junction.

If service is truly akin to worship, then how we behave and react to others, how we serve them in the smallest ways, must be genuine because, through these acts, we are serving God and responding to his call on all our lives. Just think how you would behave if you knew that it was in fact, Jesus you were showing kindness to, whether that was at the cashpoint, at the café, at the traffic lights. We can all demonstrate service to God by serving others just by starting with tiny things; the 'easy wins' that can often go unnoticed and working up from there until it all starts to feel like second nature. As Christians we are all called to serve the Lord, and the more we respond to the little things in the ways that we serve others, the more we will see Him reflected back to us in those that we choose to serve.

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