

Devotional Blog – Sunday 27th June 2021

I expect many of you have a favourite charity or good cause that you are interested in or support, whether that's by giving financially or offering your services as a volunteer. Charities rely heavily on donations of time, money, and other much needed gifts. This is certainly absolutely true for our own charity, The Extra Mile.

Charities, like most sectors in society have been severely hit by the pandemic. The last 18 months or so, has seen a dramatic drop in the income these organisations need, in order to be able, carry out the work they were set up to do.

Finances are usually boosted during the summer months by various fetes, fairs, and bazaars, but like most other activities, these have had to be cancelled or rearranged. One event that raises millions of pounds for all sorts of charities is the London Marathon and although runners were encouraged to run the 26.2 miles wherever they could, it did not quite have the same effect.

The London Marathon is as much of spectacle as it is a race. Thousands turn up to line the streets of our capital to encourage all those who are taking part, but especially those who are doing it for the sake of charities and good causes. The son of friends of ours completed the course in a rhino costume. It was one of those really hot years, but he completed the race despite the weight of his "running gear". Why did he do it? I hear you ask; he must have been bonkers as well as boiling hot in his costume.

Like a lot of folks who volunteer their time and efforts he was passionate about the cause he was running, and raising money for, which was, surprise, surprise, "Save the Rhinos". Volunteers are the life blood of many organisations and give so much of themselves because they believe in what they are doing and want to make a real difference to the lives of others, less well off than themselves.

Some charity volunteers and workers go over and beyond the call of duty, often at the expense of their own families, such is their passion for the cause. This is often the case for those who work overseas serving poorer communities, with missionary organisations, such as the Baptist Missionary Society or Tear Fund.

These people, like the Corinthian church and our own Annie and Chas Tanner, first gave themselves to the Lord (2Cor8:5), and then "gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability (2Cor8:3).

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, was always giving of Himself, especially as he went from place to place, telling those who would listen "That the Kingdom of God was near". He gave of His power as He healed the sick, the deaf, the blind and the lame. This is evident in the story of the "bleeding woman", which can be found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. When the woman reached out and touched Jesus' clothes, He realised what had happened. Mark 5:30 – "At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from Him". He gave of Himself for the woman.

To be really effective in our giving to charities and good causes, whether financially or time and effort, we should follow the example of the church at Corinth and give ourselves and the work to the Lord and then we will be able to achieve "more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us". Eph3:20

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