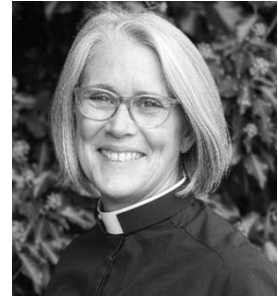


A LETTER FROM REV RONA

In today's society I think we all believe that strength lies in independence: in doing, giving, and caring for others. But what happens when we find ourselves unexpectedly needing help? Can we just soldier on? Should we? Or can we open ourselves up to receive from others?



A friend of mine, currently living in the United States is now unexpectedly facing this. Her Scientist husband's contract has ended, as planned, and it was due to restart with a different agency, but with the new Administration, everything has changed for foreigners, and they are now in limbo. She describes "totally unfamiliar territory" reflecting that they are no longer in control, plans have gone out the window, and they find themselves dependent on the care and generosity of others. "It takes humility," she said. "And a kind of trust I hadn't known I needed."

Her words stayed with me as we heard John's Gospel in Church recently. Jesus tells Peter: "When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old... someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." (John 21:18)

The challenge for each of us is whether we can be open to receiving, being led and ministered to; whether it be for just one day, a period of illness, or indeed this stage of our lives. What is inspiring is that this relinquishing of control is seen as equally valid ministry by Jesus as active ministry. We are 'feeding his sheep' when we model our part in the whole of the community. That role will necessarily change over time, and gracefully going with it inspires others.

My friend volunteers weekly at a food kitchen, providing for refugees, who clearly care for her deeply. Recently one of the women arrived with a beautifully cooked, Central American native dish for her. She weeps as she tells me about eating this lovingly created food from one of the poorest in society, and says that in many ways, she is walking more closely with God now than ever, all because she was willing to be vulnerable in her time of need.

The world draws lines between givers and receivers, but the wise among us accept that there will be times when we need to accept help, and through doing so we offer a witness to yet another way we can model our faith. Every one of us matters, however much or little we do.

As Paul writes about every bit of the body mattering: "... the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour...its parts should have equal concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:22, 3, 5)

*With love,
Rev Rona*