

The final action in the traditional list of Corporal Acts of Mercy is giving alms to the poor. The classic definition of alms is “money or food given to poor people.”

We tend not to have too many people sitting around on our streets shouting out: “Alms. Alms for the poor.” Yet, we as a church still minister to persons that are in need of assistance.

At Trinity UMC, we regularly receive calls asking for assistance with utilities, rent, medicine, gasoline, and food. It would be a blessing to be able to respond in a positive manner to all of these requests. Instead, we must judge each request as it comes in. Most people do not get assistance from us simply because we do not have the funds available for assistance. However, some people do receive this modern day equivalent of alms.

In this modern setting, we never actually give any money to those seeking assistance. If they have a bill, we pay directly to the person or organization to which the bill is owed. If they need food, we purchase the food and give it to them. If they need gasoline, we go to Food City and put the gas in their tank.

The responsibility of giving alms, however, does not entirely rest with the church. There is nothing that forbids us as individuals from assisting persons that are in need by supplying money or items.

Therein, lies the opportunity that we have to make a difference and to grow in our level of discipleship. On the one hand, we do need money given to the church so that we can assist individuals in need. The church is grateful for such donations. On the other hand, individuals have the opportunity to not only give “alms”

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 16



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

Have you every helped someone else in need? If so, how did that make you feel?

directly to people, but to also directly engage in conversation with the person that is being assisted. It is this more personal touch that I feel is important. The ability to not just hear the person’s need, but to also begin a conversation and, perhaps, enter into an ongoing dialogue. This is the basis for sharing your faith and becoming a stronger disciple.

Here are some things to consider:

- When you encounter someone seeking alms, don’t just ignore him or her. Say a quick prayer and ask God how you might help out.
- Regularly support opportunities that are given by the church as we seek to minister to groups and individuals.
- Take the time to stop and talk with the person that is seeking aid and, if possible, follow up on your conversation at a later date. Keep the channels of communication open.
- Find a local charity that needs volunteers and get involved.
- Set aside the cost of one fast food meal this week and give the money to the church NOW Team fund so that we can have it available to assist people that come to us.

Carry the cross  and follow me.
Luke 14:27, NRSV