

L, the single mother with four kids at home for whom we recently spontaneously gathered a sum to pay her electric bill, responded in an unusual way a few weeks ago. After her public assistance had come through, she said that churches have helped her so much over the years that she wanted to give back. She and Chris went through a store on a shopping spree, and L bought enough to fill up the trunk of the Civic. Because L has received food aid before, she knew exactly what to buy that would be most useful. When the food arrived at the local food pantry, they were in tears, as their shelves were very low. We were able to carry this news back to L so she would know just what her response had meant. That probably cost her something in terms of food for her family that we do not know, but it was important to her to be generous, even what beyond what she could probably afford.

A couple of weeks ago L called Chris and asked for a ride to a job interview; for reasons longer than bear telling here she had no money for a bus pass. Chris picked up and took her to the interview, and she got the job, starting the next day.

Last week F ended up with a severe and very painful infection in both ears. She went to the emergency room, but that did not clear it up. We found out late one evening that F was still in severe pain, so Chris took her to the emergency room again, waited that out, and then took her to get the prescriptions filled. That made a difference, and her ears are now recovering.

Sometimes it does not take much to help, a ride here or a few dollars there to get bus passes to get to work, yet without that those on the edge have trouble putting together even the little it takes to make meet the few ends they have. Mostly it takes being available. Yes, it is easy to be overrun if one is not careful, but we have found that with attentive discernment of the real needs that can be managed.

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