

Dear Jackie,

It is Friday morning and I am enjoying a coffee at Mosaic, the cafe belonging to Bilton Evangelical Church (BEC) in Rugby. Unusually, I am alone, so I have treated myself to quiet time so that I can read Woman Alive. I enjoy Lucy Mills' article 'Are you giving cheerfully?' It is uplifting and thought provoking. I agree with her that when we give we should do so from the best motives and not look for praise. I do try to do this, but I love praise. If any-one gives me genuine praise it makes me feel good, even if my cheeks and neck flush a little with embarrassment. I also want to give praise, which also often brings a rosy glow to the cheeks of the person being praised. I never give praise to embarrass anyone and I have received excellent feedback. Only a few days ago someone told me that I had made her day by complementing her on her work. I was so pleased. It was a win-win situation. She felt good. I felt good. I recommend it.

I flick back and forth through the magazine and, as I reach the letters page, I can see that I am not alone in wanting to offer praise. Priscilla of Amersham, Susan from Marlborough and Angie have all written to praise and express gratitude. Fantastic! Of course, Woman Alive facilitates praise and gratitude. I knew that already but Lucy Mills has got me thinking.

I reflect on the good work done by the people of BEC. They quietly help people in practical and spiritual ways. They reach people like me who never go to Church but nevertheless benefit from contact with so many of the lovely individuals who give so much to the community.

My coffee refill is brought to my table by a volunteer. Fired up by Woman Alive I decide to thank her for the kindness she shows in so many ways, especially to vulnerable and older people. I hear about things she does for others from the people who have benefitted from her time and efforts. She seems pleased. She says: *'I am so pleased that you can see God's light shining through me. God has inspired me to find ways of helping others. It is one of the ways we can praise Him. It is how I show my faith'*

A refill for my coffee and a spiritual top up too. What a bargain!

I decide to write to Woman Alive to comment on, praise and be grateful for all the good things that are happening in the community that we often don't hear about. I think the following words are pertinent.

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works** and glorify your Father in heaven."*  
(Matthew 5:14-16)

Yours sincerely,  
Heather Staff

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