



DO NOT BE BURDENED BY POSSESSIONS

At a drop-in centre for refugees and asylum seekers, I deposited my few things (which were in a plastic carrier bag) in the back room, as instructed, and went to observe the work. Drinks were available free of charge, and clients could help themselves from a table bearing food donated by a local supermarket. Another table was loaded with toiletries and second-hand, but good-quality clothing – those who needed anything could help themselves. Technical advice on immigration matters was available from an expert, and English languages classes were on offer. Everyone received a friendly welcome and the children were invited to play with toys.

When we packed up and prepared to leave, I could not find my bag of things. It took about 20 minutes to locate them: they had accidentally been put into the box of donated things remaining for redistribution next week! During that 20 minutes I was very anxious and let it be seen. On the way home, I felt ashamed as I reconsidered my response.

Had my bag not been found, I would have lost a raincoat, a new pair of tights, a shopping list, a bus pass (due to expire in 3 months' time), and an old carrier bag. Not much. My house key was still in my pocket, along with a small amount of cash, enough for the bus fare to get home. Even on that cold day (dressed as I was in a jumper) I would not have come to much harm walking for ten minutes

through the High Street, then covering a five-mile journey on a bus.

Some of those people I met at the drop-in centre had lost *everything*. Not just clothes and household goods, but savings, treasured mementos, documents proving who they were and how they were qualified, and what is more, relatives and friends (some obliged to stay behind and some who had died). Some of those people had started off with much less than I had at home, and now had practically nothing. Why was I worried about losing a few possessions, which I could easily replace?

Jesus told his disciples on one trip not to carry extra money or a spare coat,¹ but they carried the Good News. *Nothing* else should be carried if it interferes with our ability to serve. Do not be anxious about possessions.² Lord forgive me for overvaluing my things. Give me grace to hold lightly whatever you have given me, ever ready to share it with others.³

Let us travel light as we follow him.

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references

1. Matthew 10: 9-10
2. Matthew 6:25, 28a
3. Matthew 10: 8b