

Testimony of Judy Etheridge



I am from St Stephen's Church in Chatham. When I retired from teaching, colleagues asked what I was going to do now. My reply was that I would plan the rest of my life! I was excited by the thought of choosing to do something completely different. I then found myself training and was commissioned evangelist in 2000. Without me realizing it, God was gently guiding my choice.

Whenever I look back I am always surprised as God has obviously got a plan for me but does not usually tell me! I think I have always been an evangelist at heart, I remember at school wanting to lead an assembly to tell everyone else about the way God answers prayers, I even remember the quotation that got me so excited – 'Archbishop William Temple once said "Prayer is not telling God what to do, nor is it an attempt to make Him change His mind, it is giving Him the opportunity to change ours".' In my late teens and early twenties I led Guide camps in which a very important part for me was to explain to the girls how God could take over in their lives and become their Saviour. (I have recently heard from girls who met God personally at that time). Since then I have worked with children in Guides, Sunday School and Holiday Club.

During training our tutor asked if we had decided where or for whom our evangelistic work would be used. Children's work and older folk were both mentioned, I knew that I had experience with children so perhaps that was for me but I definitely did not want to work with older folk. Now I find that God has worked with me and I am loving my contacts with elderly people, it is such a joy to help when needed, to share laughter with them and to show them the love of Jesus. These people have very often a strong but almost forgotten faith and it is such a privilege to help them rekindle it.

I also enjoy meeting and listening to people who are making or are ready to make a tentative step over the doorway of the church – God is already working, I am just his hands or ears. My training and commissioning have given me the confidence and authority to meet the people and do the things I have always wanted to do. Thanks be to God!

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