



## Mutual Aid Sunday: Passing It On



**I**N 1994, OUR 8-year-old son Timothy died of a brain tumour. His health struggles also included cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, seizure disorder, and visual impairment. Caring for him brought much blessing into the life of our family, but it also took a big toll on our own health, spirits, and finances. We were fortunate to be part of a faith community that took mutual aid to heart. For

all those years, the members of our community supported us with prayers, casseroles, respite care, and financial assistance. At times it was hard to receive these gifts because we were so unable to give anything in return. Some years later, in a different community, we discovered ourselves living next to an elderly, disabled woman who had no family nearby. She needed help shoveling the walk, mowing the lawn, buying groceries, and running errands. These were things we could do for her. For us, this was a way of “passing on” the help and mutual aid that we had received from our church community in previous years. It was “sharing out of our plenty.” —*Esther Epp-Tiessen*



### FOR REFLECTION

Would you describe your church as having a spirit of generosity? Why/why not? How could you nurture generosity within your congregation and extend this spirit into the wider community?



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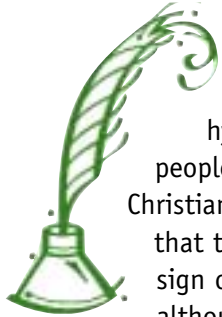
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Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **great grace** was upon them all. **There was not a needy person among them**, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it

# Barren Bread-Breaking



**I**S IT NOT SAD and intolerable hypocrisy that these poor people boast of...being the true, Christian church, never remembering that they have entirely lost their sign of true Christianity? For although many of them have plenty of everything...ornament their houses with all manner of costly furniture...and live in luxury and splendor, yet they suffer many of their own poor, afflicted members (notwithstanding their fellow believers have received one baptism and partaken of the same bread with them) to ask alms; and poor, hungry, suffering, old, lame, blind, and sick people to beg their bread at their doors.

was distributed to each as any had need.

ACTS 4:32-35

—Menno Simons, 1552

*The Collected Writings of Menno Simons.* Herald Press, 1956, p. 559.



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