



A Borrowed Friendship

By Ian Menzies

Barbara bustled into our lives unexpectedly when the local library changed its lending policy. Before the change, a librarian would select a monthly range of books for my elderly mother, which we would simply collect whilst returning last month's bagful. The change meant that to avail ourselves of this wonderful service, the selection had to be home delivered by a volunteer as part of a program for those who could no longer manage to get to the library. So along came Barbara. At first, her visits were brief, but both the visited and visitor quickly formed a special bond. Cups of tea and monthly updates on family matters, health issues and the general news of the

world blossomed into long comfortable chats. Seeing "*Barbara*" written in mum's diary meant appointments were for another day; these monthly meetings were sacrosanct, and eagerly anticipated. When mum died, Barbara came to her funeral and was warmly greeted by many who had come to know the importance of her dedication. In the years that have passed since, occasional packages for Sammy Stamp still appear in our letterbox; accidental meetings in the supermarket provide catch-ups; sightings on dog walks provoke cheery waves. Barbara's simple brief as a library volunteer had led to so much more, and remains much appreciated.

Reflection:

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

1 Peter 4:10.