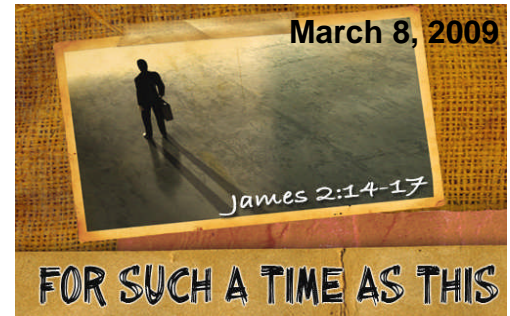


## For Such a Time as This

God has provided a map for our journey in loving others. This week we'll explore what the Bible has to say about serving the poor, the widows, and the orphans, and how God desires for us to show his love to those in need.



James 2:14-17 (NIV)

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

## Reflections

### Elizabeth House

For over 10 years, St John has participated in a local ministry called Elizabeth House. Recently, my kids and I sat down with Ken Cunningham, a long time facilitator of the ministry, to learn more.

Here's a description from a 9 year-old's perspective:

*"Elizabeth House is a soup kitchen that serves people that can't afford to feed themselves. It gets its food (which is not just soup) from FISH of Laurel. On average, 30 people come each night to get some food. [St John provides volunteers] who help at the Elizabeth House each month."*

When we take time to consider 'people that can't afford to feed themselves', it's worth noting that St John is located in the 3rd richest county in the US. Although words like 'homeless' and 'poor' are commonly used, how much do we really under-

stand them? In addition to serving - seeing God's love and compassion lived out - perhaps Elizabeth House is an opportunity for us become more in tune with a situation that grips much of the world.

So what's actually involved? Here's a teens-eye view of the work:

*"Elizabeth House is a place where all kinds of people are welcomed to eat dinner, but aims towards serving people who can't afford a proper meal. At our church, we help once a month (on the third Saturday). There are two main jobs: the openers set up and prepare the food. Volunteers from St John handle the second part of the job - closing - which includes serving the food, welcoming guests,*

*and cleaning up. Our church usually has 4 to 5 people attend each month when we go."*

Although Elizabeth House is modest in size, around 40 people are fed there each day. St John has become part of a larger community of volunteers who keep the ministry running, and there are always opportunities to do more. While we originally provided volunteers a few times per year, we now provide a crew of volunteers every month.

Perhaps God is calling you, or perhaps the small group you're in, to take a step out in the community. Elizabeth House is a great opportunity to serve and support our local community.

—Mike West

### My Prayer

Dear Lord, I praise you for your love of this world and for your plan for it. Help me to value what you value, to love those in this world who I've been conditioned to ignore. Please help me to treasure what is eternal and to use what you've given me to bless my relationships and to be generous and rich in good deeds. Amen

## Readings

### Sunday, March 8

#### James 2:14-17

Do your actions reflect where you think you are in your faith? How can you ask God to inspire your commitment to match your heart?

### Monday, March 9

#### Matthew 5:3-6

How can you allow God to transform your mind, to value what God values?

### Tuesday, March 10

#### Proverbs 14:31

What about this passage challenges you the most? Is there an action or change you feel convicted to make?

### Wednesday, March 11

#### 1 John 3:17

If you look at your current actions of love toward others, what conclusions do you draw about your faith in light of this passage?

### Thursday, March 12

#### 2 Corinthians 8:8-9, 10-14

Is your love for the church hot or cold? How do you think God has created you to serve the body of Christ?

### Friday, March 13

#### Matthew 6:25-33

Spend time reflecting on what you treasure. What have you mistakenly treasured, and what would you like to treasure?

### Saturday, March 14

#### Philippians 2:6-8

This is the attitude God asks of you. Can you look not for your own advancement, but for the good of others?

***Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).***

#### Resource:

"Hope Lives: A Journey of Restoration" Copyright © 2008 Amber Van Schooneveld.

**Did You Know...**that there are several web sites you can visit to learn more about:

Fair Trade—[www.transfairusa.org](http://www.transfairusa.org)  
Debt Relief—[www.data.org](http://www.data.org)  
Micro Loans—[www.opportunity.org](http://www.opportunity.org)  
Voice of the Martyrs—[www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)