

Deep Waters

By Preston Pouteaux

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It was a Sunday I will never forget. The morning dawned with a crack of lightning and a torrent of worries for many people in my town. Water levels rose and first covered the road down our street (whew, good thing we don't live down there), then it filled the street in front of our home (oh, no), then onto our lawn, then up across our gardens and soon the whole neighbourhood was under water. Backyards, basements, intersections, and fields became the unhappy hosts for a flood that rarely happens in our community. What started as an entertaining lightning storm turned into a flood of frustration and sadness for many.

We got a call from school where our church meets, the parking lot was a new lake and the power was out. We canceled the worship service and soon we were scrambling across town to move around pumps and generators. Knee deep in a basement full of rainwater, pulling up half submerged children's art, I felt the weight of a morning no one expected.

Back on my own street neighbours in rubber boots and pyjamas emerged from their porches, wide eyed at the river before us. Neighbours were asking back and forth if everyone was OK, if basements were still dry, and if there was anything each other could do to help. A neighbour from one street over, who I met at our recent block party, came over to help open up a clogged sewer grate. Another neighbour helped us shovel the debris off of our lawn.

Studies have shown how people truly respond during natural disasters, and it may not be what you think. Every movie depicts panic, violence, and every-man-for-himself-chaos in the wake of a crisis. But the truth is that during major floods or storms, people respond with genuine care for those around them. As I drove around I saw it first hand: a city in full-on care-mode.

Help and safety may not come in the form of a well-laid plan or a pocket full of resources. It often comes in the form of a person, a friend, and a neighbour. On that infamous Sunday we witnessed people stepping out, into the deep waters, to help each other out. It was neighbourliness at its best.

God said, "When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown." I think one of the ways that God is with us in the difficult times is that he sends along others to help us when we're up to our neck in a situation we can't handle. He gives us neighbours, friends, churches, and families of people who don't leave us to flounder on our own.

In the aftermath of the floods that hit our town, we discovered the gift we have in each other. We learned that all around us, every day, are people who have our backs. Today everyone on our street knows that they will never have to go it alone. Every time you pass your neighbour, may you be reminded that you have allies who will come to you, no matter what your 'deep waters' may be.

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