

It's nothing fancy (Luke 17:5-10)

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My grandmother was well into her 90s when I called ahead to let her know we'd be stopping to see her the next day. "I'll make lunch," she told me. I protested: that wouldn't be necessary; I didn't want her to go to the trouble. She finally acquiesced about lunch, and I hung up thinking I had won.

I should have known better. She had more than nine decades under her belt of doing things her way.

We arrived as scheduled at her small, tidy apartment, our new baby in tow, exhausted from being new parents and traveling, so that my grandmother could meet her newest great-grandchild. After she held the baby and cooed over him, she said with a hint of smugness, "I made cake. Let's have some cake. It's nothing fancy. Would you like some coffee?"

So we had cake and coffee, because I wouldn't let her make lunch for us. As we thanked her profusely, she kept repeating, "It's nothing fancy; it's just cake."

My grandma wouldn't have prefaced her statement about the cake with "I am a worthless slave," but her belief that she was only doing what she should have done rang loud and clear. When someone visited, she served something--lunch, coffee, a little something sweet. I should have known better than to try to change how things were done.

I've known many other people who have shrugged off the thanks I have offered them, saying that they're simply doing their job, or doing what they ought to have done. I, too, become uncomfortable or don't know how to respond when people thank me for doing what I ought to have done.

I never would have considered not saying thank you, but I know that's not what motivated my grandmother, or any of the others I have thanked. We don't do it for the thanks; we serve those we love because it's what Jesus calls us to do. Besides-- don't worry; it's nothing fancy. It's just cake. Let's have coffee.