Welcome to the fourth Holy Habits prompt on **Gladness and Generosity.** Yesterday at church we focused on the extremes in human experience.  In the morning we shared the gladness of Cherry, Steve and Phoebe at Ivy’s dedication.  It was the fourth such service at BG since the summer, and there will be another on 23 December!  How blessed we are.

But others will say ‘How can I be glad?’  Some of us today are facing serious illness, long-running family problems, money issues, and bereavement.  At yesterday afternoon’s memorial service, candles were lit in memory of 36 loved ones, some of whom have died this year, and others years ago, but who are still deeply missed.  At some time in our lives all of us will grieve and agonise over the loss of someone without whom it is hard to go on living.  But beneath those feelings can be a gladness that the loved one is no longer suffering, and is safe with Jesus for evermore, and that one day we will meet again.  There can also be a deep sense that Jesus knows, understands, and is with us in our grief and in the midst of whatever problems we face.

**Do you know somebody who is experiencing one of life’s extremes** at present, and would welcome a visit, a telephone call or a card, sharing gladness or offering an encouraging message?

Looking more widely, Christmas is now only 28 days away.  Friday was Black Friday, expected to be the biggest shopping day of the year.  Millions of people will have expressed their generosity spending what the experts say will be billions of pounds, seeking the perfect presents.  Will the gladness of the recipients match the hopes of the givers?

Others will have little spare cash, but will run into debt to avoid disappointing those they love, especially their children, who will see the glittering adverts and long for what others have.

***Lord God, may rich and poor both learn that true gladness is not found in material things, but in the love of family, friends and the gift of God’s own Son.***

*Produced by Daphne and John Wilkins on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*