LOVE PROTECTS CONTD.

Sacrificial Love

Jesus set the bar high when he said,

"Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

(John 15:13)

Love costs something. It requires sacrifice.

In safeguarding, that might look like:

- giving up your time for criminal record checks and training sessions
- following processes even when they feel inconvenient
- challenging behaviour, even from people you respect
- paying attention to power dynamics and appropriate boundaries
- supporting volunteers with proper supervision and care
- speaking up when your gut tells you something's off
- resisting the temptation to cut corners just to save time or money

None of this feels particularly 'spiritual' in the moment, but safeguarding isn't a distraction from ministry; it IS ministry. It's not separate from discipleship; it IS discipleship, because it is a form of love.

If We Don't Protect, We Don't Love

Paul says that even if we speak 'in tongues', prophesy, or have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, we have nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:2)

In church life, we can preach brilliant sermons, run dynamic youth programmes, and pack out our Sunday services. But if we fail to protect people from harm, we've failed in our fundamental calling to love.

This Safeguarding Sunday

This year's theme helps us to make a connection we sometimes miss:

Safeguarding = Protection, Protection = Love,
Therefore, **Safeguarding = Love in Action**

Safeguarding isn't bureaucracy getting in the way of "real" ministry. It's a profoundly Christian calling that flows naturally from who God is and who we're becoming in Him. It reflects the heart of the Good Shepherd, the One who leaves the 99 to protect the one who's vulnerable (Matthew 18:12-14).

This Safeguarding Sunday isn't about adding another burden to your already busy schedule. Instead, it's an invitation to see protection not as obligation, but as opportunity, worship, and love made real.

The Heart of It All

God has always been in the business of protection. From Eden's boundaries to the cities of refuge, from the shepherd's rod and staff to Jesus laying down His life – our God protects His people. And He calls us to do the same.

Yes, safeguarding involves policies, procedures, training and more. But at its heart, it's about people - precious, valued people made in the image of God. When we protect them, we love them. When we love them, we reflect the heart of God.

Because love protects. Always.

This Safeguarding Sunday, let's embrace protection not as a duty, but as one of the most beautiful expressions of our faith. Because when we truly understand that love protects, safeguarding stops being something we have to do and becomes something we can't help but do.