A petition heard in a London parish church (1587)

For one Mathew Roe of Dunster in the Countrie of Somersedsheare who Having been a Mr and owner of Shippinge and of Compotent Livinge who by the evationn of pyrattes and by greate losse at Sea is utterly ymprovenished and undon, and altogether unable to mayntayne himselfe his wyfe and Children So that theye are lyke to perishe wt Famen this hard yeare unles he be relieved wt the Benevolence & Charytable Devocioun of welldisposed people as By letters of certifficatt Bothe from the Lorde morlye & the Lorde Storton and others in consideration wherof he was graunted a lysence Jenerall By the lorde Admyrall
to aske the good willes of the well desposed people inhabetinge with in the Queenes Maties Realme of England.

Social status of supplicant
Misfortune. Also, exciting!
Giving as a religious act
Important sponsors
Exhaustion of resources
Qualities of donors

Who is my neighbour?

Thomas Harman to the Countess of Shrewsbury (1572)
I (by good experience) w standing and considering your most tender, pitifull, gentle nature, not only hauing a vigilant and mercifull eye to your poore indigent & feeble parishioners: yea not only in the parish wher your honour most happely doth dwell, but also in others inuironing or nighe adioyning to the same. As also aboundantly powring out dayly your ardent and bountifull charitie vppon all such as commeth for reliefe vnto your luckly gates. I thought it good, necessary, and my bounden dutye to acquayn your goodnes with the abominable, wicked and detestable behauior of all these rowsey, ragged rabblement of rakehelles, that vnder the pretence of great misery, diseases and other innumerable calamities, which they fayne through great hipocrisie, doe win and gayne great almes in all places where they wyly wander, to the utter deludinge of the good geuers: deceyiing and impouerishing of al such poore housholders.

Foxe's Story of Christopher Landesdale (1568)
There chaunced … a poore man, being sicke of the bloudy flixe, for very weaknes, to lye downe in a ditch of the sayd Landesdales, not a stones cast from hys house … but would not shew hym so much pitie. And thus poore Lazarus there lay night and daj, about vj. dayes ere he dyed. Certaine good neighbours hearing of this, procured thinges necessary for hys reliefe, but he was so farre spent, that he could not be recouered: who lay broyling in the hoate Sunne with a horrible smell most pitifully to beholde … but Landesdale disdayned to contribute any reliefe vnto hym … And thus much concerning the end of poore Lazarus. … About two yeares after thys, the sayd Landesdale being full of drinke (as hys custome was) came ryding in great hast … reeling to & fro like a drunkard …there tumbled headlong into the ditch…The neighbours hearing of the death of thys man, and considering the maner thereof, sayd it was iustly fallen vppon hym, that as he suffered the poore man to lye and die in the ditch neare vnto hym, so hys end was to die in a ditch likewise…And thus has thou in thys story (Christen brother and reader) the true image of the rich glutton and poore Lazarus, set out before thine eyes, whereby we haue all to learne.