

Being family in Christ's Church

Week 5: Giving

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

Share encouraging stories of when you have felt blessed though your giving or someone else's giving to you.

WORSHIP

Read one of the Psalms that praise God for his provision (e.g. 146, 147)
Take a few moments of silence to pick out verses that you have been drawn to and explain why.

Have a time of prayer thanking the Lord for his provision.

WORD

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

1. The poorest churches, the Macedonia churches, gave the most generously. Looking at verses 1-5 can you suggest why this might have been?
2. In verse 8 Paul writes, 'I want to test the sincerity of your love'. Why does Paul consider that giving is somehow a litmus test of love and obedience for the Corinthians – and for us?
3. We usually think about giving to meet needs. Looking at verse 9 what does Paul suggest is the ultimate motivation for Christian giving?
4. Why do you think that Paul is willing to give advice about giving but will not command the Corinthians to do something?

Growth Group Notes

Autumn 2019



Read 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 and 9:1-5

5. What does Paul mean in verse 12 when he talks of 'giving from what you have'? Is it about giving from what we have left over when everything else is paid for or from our income as a whole?
6. What does Paul mean by, 'equality' or 'fair shares' in verses 13-15? (You may find turning back to Exodus 16:18 quoted in verse 15, the story of God's provision of manna in the desert, helpful.)
7. Why in 8:11 and in 9:1-5 is Paul concerned that the desire to give is followed by practical action and planning to make their gift?

Read 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

8. What does the illustration of the sower teach us about giving?
9. What does the passage suggest are the blessings and benefits of generous giving?
10. Verse 8 is a tough verse. It promises God's abundant provision so two tough questions: (a) How do we feel about trusting God for everything that we need and can anyone share a personal example of this? (b) What advice would you give to someone in serious debt or money worry as they read this verse?

WHAT NEXT?

We have a £29,000 deficit in budget for this year. For further details please refer to the flyer which summarises the "Christ Church Annual Giving Day Appeal".

Please use these prayer points:

1. Pray that the giving in the church will increase
 - Give thanks that we are a very generous church. Give thanks for the many ways that the church family gives: not just financially, but also our time, energy, and by using our gifts in our mission and ministry.

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- Pray that we can close the giving gap for this year.
 - Pray for the regular giving in the church to increase so that we don't have a giving gap next year.
 - Pray that all church members will prayerfully review their giving even if that means that they can't increase their giving or need to reduce it.
 - Pray that members of the church who are not regular givers will prayerfully consider being part of this great generosity.
 - Ask the Lord if there is something you should be giving up – so you can give sacrificially.
2. Pray for the Far Out missions we support financially as a church:
- Home Missionary Societies:
- UCB
 - Oakhanger Project
- Overseas Missionary Societies:
- Wycliffe Bible Translators
 - CSW
 - IcFem Mission
- Relief and Development:
- Tear Fund
 - PCF Gateway Trust
3. Pray for other needs as necessary including follow-up from previous weeks.

For personal reflection:

Paul says in Romans 12:1 that *offering your body as a living sacrifice* is *holy and pleasing to God*. Holy means set apart for God, so our bodies – and all that we have (including our money), are placed at God's disposal, to do with as he wills. This is pleasing to God. Our giving is an act of worship.