

A Short Guide to Encouraging Generous Giving



Practical steps for parishes

Introduction

Each week hundreds of thousands of Church of England members give their time, their skills and their money to support the work of the Church. Without them, the Church's ministry and its participation in mission would be far less significant.

This short guide seeks to equip parishes to nurture generosity. It's not just about the giving of money – the giving of time, of skills, of hospitality and of compassion are vital too; but it is mainly about money. Martin Luther said that 'there are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind, and the purse.' Where we spend our money reveals our priorities in life and shows the challenge of discipleship.

Generosity needs to be encouraged – whole-hearted, open generosity that responds to need, as Jesus teaches that the Good Samaritan showed when he responded to the needs he found on the road to Jericho. Generosity is not primarily about meeting the financial and volunteering needs of the church; but it is essential that God's people are generous in God's house, for if we can't be generous there, where can we show true unfettered generosity? We need to be generous as churches too – living out in our corporate lives, the values that we seek to encourage in our individual walks of faith.

This booklet provides a range of simple tasks that churches can do to make a difference.

give discipleship heart
stewardship purse
head generosity
essential

Preach and Teach

With over 2300 verses in the Bible on money, wealth and possessions, there is no shortage of resource for the preacher. It is recommended that at least once a year preachers take the giving of money as their major theme; and also to preach on these passages relating to generosity and giving as and when they arise as part of their normal pattern of preaching and teaching.

To support this teaching pattern, there are a series of three different leaflets and accompanying talks in the 'Giving for Life' series. These offer one or two Sunday morning sermons, with leaflets for people to take away to guide personal reflection in the following week. These can either be used as a stand-alone

teaching session, or can be combined with a pledge form to create a simple giving review. They can be viewed or ordered from the Parish Resources website:

www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife/



Many clergy can feel uncomfortable speaking about money, and have said that they feel somewhat compromised by the fact that so much of the money that is received by the church ultimately goes to meet the cost of stipends. However, the real task of the preacher is to nurture holistically generous giving: faith-raising, rather than fund-raising. From the pulpit, our challenge is to equip disciples to live generously in all aspects of their lives, rather than to focus on the costs of running the church.

Link Giving with Mission & Ministry, and Say Thank You

Most charities are very clear in communicating how individual giving is used to further the charity's work. Many churches are much less clear in articulating the link between giving, and the mission and ministry that flows from it.

Each church should have some form of vision or mission plan that it is seeking to live out. In many cases, that will have a cost attached to it. The cost may be

monetary, or it may require volunteers to offer their time and talents, but it will be there. Communicating this as part of any giving review helps givers consider how much they might give to the church, when set against all of the other opportunities to give.

It is also good practice to write an annual thank you letter to all planned givers. This provides an opportunity to thank them for their support, and again to explain how their giving, and that of other planned givers, has enabled the church to fulfil various aspects of its mission and ministry.

There are a variety of template letters available on the Parish Resources website. It is important to vary the letter from year to year; it could come from the Treasurer, Churchwardens, Incumbent or Planned Giving Secretary. The letter doesn't have to identify the amount given, but if it does, it should come from the Treasurer or Planned Giving Secretary who might be expected to be aware of the amount given.

Finally, don't include any request for people to review their giving, as this devalues the thank you.



Giving Programmes

It's good practice to encourage church members to prayerfully review their giving once a year. This should be done in different ways, and a formal 'pledge' response might not be sought every year. There are a number of programmes that are freely available on-line:

A PARISH FUNDING PROGRAMME

Where do I get it from? www.parishresources.org.uk/giving/pfp/

Who does it suit? All churches, except possibly the smallest.

What are its strengths?

- Expressing vision to motivate giving, as well as financial need.
- Building planned giving.

A RURAL GIVING PROGRAMME

Where do I get it from? www.parishresources.org.uk/rural/

Who does it suit? Smaller and rural churches

What are its strengths?

- Opportunity to reach out to wider community.
- Building planned giving.
- Simple 2-page guidance with templates.

GIVING IN GRACE

Where do I get it from? www.givinginGrace.org



Who does it suit? All churches, except possibly the smallest.

What are its strengths?

- Range of excellent resources & comprehensive guidance.
- Those looking for teen or all-age resources.
- Good preaching resources.

Legacies

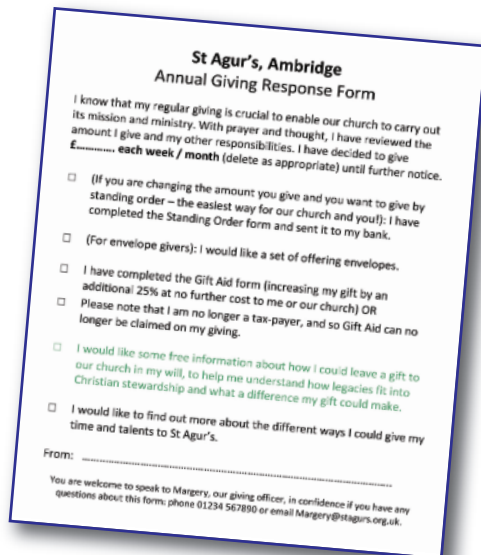
Stewardship encompasses what we do with all that God has entrusted to us. Financially, stewardship covers both our regular giving and the one-off gifts from what we have accumulated. These one-off gifts are often the greatest gifts we will make during, or after our lifetime, and are usually in response to a particular need or opportunity.

It is good Christian stewardship to encourage people to make a Will, and review it regularly. People only consider rewriting their Wills every 3 – 5 years, so at any one time, legacies may only be relevant to a small proportion of the congregation. Adding an extra check box to a giving review form provides a low-key way to allow members to request further information on leaving a gift to the church as a part of their stewardship.

Your PCC will need to be clear on what you will provide to church members who request such further information. To help you consider what you might offer, you can order a FREE PCC starter pack from the link below.

It is good practice for the PCC to make and communicate a legacy policy on how gifts will be used, and to have some simple literature available to those seeking information; this might be a generic leaflet, or one customised to your parish. Further guidance on developing a legacy policy and customising a leaflet are available on the Parish Resources website:

www.parishresources.org.uk/legacies



St Agur's, Ambridge
Annual Giving Response Form

I know that my regular giving is crucial to enable our church to carry out its mission and ministry. With prayer and thought, I have reviewed the amount I give and my other responsibilities. I have decided to give £..... each week / month (delete as appropriate) until further notice.

- (If you are changing the amount you give and you want to give by standing order – the easiest way for our church and you!): I have completed the Standing Order form and sent it to my bank.
- (For envelope givers): I would like a set of offering envelopes.
- I have completed the Gift Aid form (increasing my gift by an additional 25% at no further cost to me or our church) OR
- Please note that I am no longer a tax-payer, and so Gift Aid can no longer be claimed on my giving.
- I would like some free information about how I could leave a gift to our church in my will, to help me understand how legacies fit into Christian stewardship and what a difference my gift could make.
- I would like to find out more about the different ways I could give my time and talents to St Agur's.

From:

You are welcome to speak to Margery, our giving officer, in confidence if you have any questions about this form, phone 01234 567890 or email Margery@stagurs.org.uk.

Maximising Gift Aid

Church of England parishes collectively receive over £80 million in reclaimed Gift Aid each year, and the introduction of the Small Donations Scheme means that by 2015, we anticipate parishes to be benefiting by over £100 million – that's £8,000 for the average parish.

giftaid it

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers managing Gift Aid, and the large proportion of regular giving that is covered by a Gift Aid declaration, Church of England parishes are some of the UK's most Gift Aid efficient charities – around three quarters of all of our donations are given through Gift Aid.

There is a set of Gift Aid guides available on the Parish Resources website. These include guidance on Gift Aid declarations, how to claim, what is covered and what is not covered by Gift Aid and much more. See: www.parishresources.org.uk/giftaid/

From April 2013, the Small Donations Scheme enables parishes to claim on a Gift Aid style payment cash donations of £20 or less that are not covered by a Gift Aid declaration, up to a limit of £5,000 per church. The scheme is simple to operate, and the record keeping should reflect existing practice, or a small adjustment to it, for most parishes. Guidance is available at:

www.parishresources.org.uk/giftaid/smalldonations/



Further help...

There is plenty of further help available. There is a wide variety of resources covering all aspects of stewardship, parish finance and administration on the Parish Resources website:

www.parishresources.org.uk From the site you can download electronic versions of materials, or order paper copies of many of them.

For more information on Wills and legacies, call the Church Legacy and Wills information line on 08445 870875 or visit www.churchlegacy.org.uk

Stewardship also relates to how we spend money, and the Parish Buying initiative has been introduced to help parishes buy together and save together. Already over 5000 have signed up. Visit www.parishbuying.org.uk to find out more.

Most dioceses have someone who can help parishes nurture generous giving. They may be a full-time Stewardship or Giving Officer, or they may have a different title, but they share a passion for helping churches grow and resource their mission and ministry.

