

Giving Study Sheet

Aim: A series of sheets to prompt group discussion around giving. This discussion may primarily lead to individual action. It should not lead necessarily to action within the group. The discussion may lead to different ways of doing things in the life of the church.

Text: 2 Corinthians 8:7

⁷But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (*New International Version 1984*)

⁷But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (*New International Version 2011*)

Reflection

Most of us try to grow as Christians in many ways. Our churches' programmes encourage us to develop on our Christian journey and often provide training in many different areas of discipleship.

But many of us often concentrate on what we think are the more 'spiritual' aspects of our discipleship. Worship, evangelism, ministry, and preaching can be seen as far more important than our giving back to the Lord. Talk of giving can be restricted to times when funds are required to repair the crumbling church, or to balance the church's annual budget. Giving can therefore be treated as something that has to be done, and you get it out of the way as quickly as possible so you can move on to more important things.

Paul didn't just mention giving once in his letters, he referred to the grace of giving many times. He clearly regarded it as very important. Paul is telling us that this 'grace of giving' is as much a spiritual gift as faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness and love. Grace is another word for generosity and he refers to our giving being our response to the overflowing generosity of God.

Look at Romans 12 & 15, 1 Corinthians 16 v1-5 and other parts of 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 for other times Paul talks about giving.

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Discussion Points

These are suggestions – address as many or as few as your group wishes to do. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Do you honestly think of your giving as a spiritual matter?
- Is your giving made in response to an appeal for funds, or your response to God's overflowing generosity?
- If your church is in the happy position of having plenty of funds in reserves, is it OK to limit your giving to the little that is required?
- How much time do you spend thinking and praying about your giving back to God?

Concluding thought

Our giving back to the Lord is not just something that funds the work of the church; it is a key aspect of our personal discipleship.

Music

Give (Michael Baltersby)
Take my life and let it be
O give thanks (Graham Kendrick)

Giving and Funding Team
Diocese of Bath & Wells