

St Paul's Dorking Spring 2006



Freed to give

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Giving Prayer

*Yours Lord is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty;
everything in heaven and on earth is yours.*

From you and through you and to you are all things. To you be the glory forever.

*Lord, you are good and your love endures for ever. All things come from you,
give us grateful hearts to give back to you what is your own.*

Amen.

Based on 1 Chronicles 29 and Romans 11

Many years ago I remember as a small boy making the decision to give some of my pocket money to the church. However like all small boys I loved going to the sweet shop! Do you remember black jacks, fruit salads and flying saucers? Anyway on this particular occasion I remember being sorely tempted to spend the money I was to give to the church on toffees instead! At the very last I resisted and instead popped my pocket money in the offering on Sunday. The following day as I was leaving school a boy I hardly knew ran past me and threw me an unopened bag of toffees! I was astonished. Not manna from heaven but something equally as tasty!

That incident has stayed with me over the years and has helped me reflect on the subject of Christian Stewardship and God's generosity. Over the next two months here at St. Paul's we too have such an opportunity; an opportunity to embrace the richness and diversity of the life of our church and to prayerfully consider the way that each of us can contribute to God's work here through our giving.

Beginning with the first Sunday in February and culminating in a series of presentations in mid March we will be exploring together **what** we give to at St. Paul's, **why** we give and **how** we can give. Sunday sermons will focus on the **what**, small groups on the **why** and the presentations in March on the **how!**

During this time the **Giving to St. Paul's Team**, set up at the end of last year by the PCC, will help us focus particularly on the **how** of giving, and will have an important part to play in encouraging this aspect of our Christian discipleship. The team will be communicating with everyone in church and inviting us to a presentation in March.

These notes are to accompany the next five weeks of preaching and teaching and are a key resource for small groups and individual study and prayer. Many thanks to Laura for compiling them and for heading up our **Giving to St Paul's Team**. Thanks also to the Team Members (Roger Gundry, Catherine Matthews, Laura Parker, Pat Goode, Amanda Johnson, and Paul Bryer) who have overseen this important time in the life of our church.

Let us pray that the next five weeks will give each one of us opportunities to discover more about the generosity of God and how we can respond: and look out for the first Sunday in February when all of us will have the opportunity to sample some sweet shop delicacies!

Paul Bryer

how to use the notes

These notes are designed to be used over a five week period and are loosely connected with the Sunday morning theme. However, please do feel free to 'pick and mix' between the studies, as best suits your own group! You will note that half term falls during the period and that we are offering a visit to your group by one of the *Giving to St Paul's Team* which will take up one study week, and so you may not find you are able to cover every study.

If you read through the aim of each study, you should be able to work out what will best suit your group, and at what point during the period. In particular, I would commend studies 1, 3 and 5 to you for group work. Studies 2 and 4 will lend themselves better to either group work or individual study.

Please do use both the key verse and the campaign prayer as focus points each week. Allow time for worship at the beginning, rather than going straight into the studies, and make sure that at the end your prayer time can include time for personal prayer within the group as well as prayer for issues relating to the subject of giving.

I know that some group members will be worried about talking about giving, and that many will not want to talk about their own personal approach. Please do emphasise two points that I hope will reassure such members:

- (1) That we are not advocating one approach for everyone
- (2) That no one needs to talk about their own situation unless they feel that they want to.

In addition, continue to emphasise confidentiality within the group.

In the appendix you will find some suggestions for worship and also some book and web references. There is information on debt counselling as well as information on giving.

Some people will feel that five weeks looking at the subject of giving is a lot of weeks! However, as I have looked at the subject I have become more and more aware of how wide it is; covering our attitude to God, our response to God and to faith, our discipleship, our lifestyle and our response to our culture, as well as what it means to be church in the 21st Century. We would encourage you to explore this rich and rewarding area together as an adventure in faith rather than as a necessary response to financial need.

May God Bless you all in your walk with Him this term

Laura Parker

outline timetable

Sunday 5th February Freed to Give!
From Sunday 5th Start of daily individual prayer programme
Notes **1. Giving Generously**

Sunday 12th February Wise Stewards
Notes **2. Giving as Stewardship**
W/c 12th Feb Invitations to the social event sent out

Sunday 19th February Church of England
Notes **3. Giving Gladly**

Sunday 26th February World Church
Notes **4. Gaining from Giving**
W/c 26th Feb Follow up calls to invitations

Sunday 5th March Community
Notes **5. Getting Going with Giving**

Sunday 12th March Family
Tues-Thurs 14-16th Social event and Giving Presentation

Sunday 19th March Giving Gladly
Catch up week (from Notes 1-5)
Tuesday 21st Social event and Giving Presentation (am)

W/c 26th March Follow up phone calls to remind people to return pledge forms

W/c 16th April Remainder of follow up calls

Sunday 23rd April Thanksgiving Service
End of individual prayer programme

Monday 24th April APCM

Between 5th February and 4th March the Giving to St Paul's Team will be available to visit small groups and individuals to talk through some of the background to the giving programme and answer your questions. Please contact Laura Parker if you would like to arrange a date.

I. Giving Generously w/c 5th Feb

Aim: To look at the Biblical call to give, and explore what giving generously means for us today.

Key Verse: "Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops". Proverbs 3:9

Worship

Read the First Fruits prayer in the appendix and spend some time thanking God for the scale of all He has made.

Word

1. The Old Testament talks about tithing our income; giving 10% away, for the care and support of God's family and those in need. (Genesis 14:20 and Deut 14:22-23). Under Mosaic law the provision of one-tenth was made:
 - as a thanksgiving for God's continued blessing to his people
 - as a sacrificial offering to God
 - as a way of meeting the physical needs of those who were unable to provide for themselves (priests, widows, etc)
 - Some of the tithe was used by the community in celebration and feasting.Which of these seem relevant today? Why? What can you see as the advantages/disadvantages of following a practice of tithing nowadays? Consider (a) the idea of giving a proportion of income regularly (b) giving 10%
2. If we think tithing has some value, how do we work out what 10% means? Some people would say that giving 10% is an obligation, and that sacrificial giving only starts after that; what do you think?
3. Read the key verse, Proverbs 3:9. The emphasis here is upon giving God the first fruits. Why do you think this is? What are our 'first fruits'? What does it mean to honour the Lord with our wealth?
4. The NT does not refer directly to tithing, although it would have been practiced at that time. Read about how Jesus commended the widow's giving in Luke 21: 1-4. She gave her all that she had. In contrast, he condemns the Pharisees for sticking religiously to tithing yet neglecting justice, mercy and faithfulness. (Matt 23:23-24). What does this tell us about our attitude towards how much we give?
5. The Church of England gives information on Giving and Christian Stewardship at www.cofe.anglican.org/info/funding/stewardship.html . It says this: 'Unless our money gift has cost us something, it is not really a thanksgiving, but more like a tip. And one of the tensions in our discipleship lies in whether we live our life and give to God the odd crumb, or whether we give to God first, and then manage the rest. If the Christian disciple does the first, he will never be satisfied: If he does the second, he will always have enough'.
To what extent do you agree/ disagree with this statement? (see also 2 Sam 24:24)
6. What are the implications of giving the 'first fruits' to our church here at St. Paul's? How do we decide what to give to the local church and what to give to the wider church?

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer for our exploration of the area of Giving over the next six weeks, including the **Giving Prayer**.

NB: The Giving to St Paul's Team would really value your input as we consider this subject over the next 5 weeks. Please send any questions and thoughts from your group to Paul Bryer and Laura Parker. We can't guarantee to be able to answer all of them directly, but we will make sure that over the next few weeks the preaching, communications and information will try to pick up on them and it will help to tailor the presentations w/c 12th March. Thank you

2. Giving as Stewardship w/c 12th February

Aim: To look at how the giving of money can be part of the stewardship of the world's resources that God has placed in our hands, and the implications for this in terms of our responsibility.

Key verse: *"Be careful to follow all the commands of the Lord your God that you may possess the good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants" 1 Chronicles 28:8*

Worship

Read Genesis 1:1-3, 26-30 and then spend some time in praise of God, his Creator skills, and all that he has made.

Word

1. God placed man in charge of the world, to rule it responsibly (Genesis 1:28-30). What kind of things do we think of when we think about caring for God's world?
2. The key verse from Chronicles is taken from David's charge to his people and to his son Solomon, when he knew that they would be responsible for building the temple (See 1 Chronicles 28:1-8). Sadler defines stewardship as *'willingness to be accountable for some larger body than ourselves, such as an organisation or community'*. Do we ever view our church family of St Paul's in this light? What does it mean to be a steward of God's church as well as his world?
3. What practical steps can we take to make sure our giving to our church family is 'responsible'? (Consider planning your giving, using gift aid, committing to giving for a period of time, praying about it).
What are the benefits for (a) ourselves (b) St Pauls if we do this?
4. What questions can we think of now, that we would like to raise re the finances of St Pauls?
Please send any questions and thoughts from your group to Paul Bryer and Laura Parker

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer perhaps using the key verse and the **Giving Prayer**

3. Giving Gladly w/c 19th February

Aim: To remind ourselves of what it means to give joyfully to God as part of our worship.

Key verse: *"Yours O Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours...everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand" 1 Chron 29:11,14*

Worship: Use the key verse as a prayer, and praise God for His gifts to His people as well as to us specifically. (Consider using the words of 'Worship the Lord', in appendix).

Word:

1. There is a well used expression, 'The Lord loves a cheerful giver'. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. What does it mean to be a joyful giver?
2. The key verse for this week is often used in church when we thank God for the offering taken. (You can read the full story in 1 Chronicles 29: 10-20). David had collected together the gifts from the people for the building of the temple and he rejoices in what God has given him, as he offers God the gifts of the people. What is the relationship between giving and worship? Do they seem to fit together or to be two entirely different things?
3. Is giving one of the ways we use to express our worship of God here at St Pauls? Can you think of ways in which giving and worship could be more closely linked?
4. Is it possible to link giving and worship if we do not have much money or are in debt? (If you want to explore this further, you may wish to revisit the story of the widow's mite in Luke 21:1-4)
5. Many of us like to know exactly how our money is going to be used before we give it. Is this simply being responsible and careful with God's resources, or does it limit the degree to which we can simply give joyfully? How much should we seek to influence and control how our money is used by our church family?
6. This Sunday we learnt something of what it means to belong to the Church of England, and what it costs us (see introductory notes, you may also want to look at the information on the PCC notice board in church). How do we feel about being part of the bigger church? Does the passage today say anything about what our attitude should be?

Prayer

Pray for the C of E and for the Guildford diocese.
You may also wish to use the **Giving Prayer** again.

4 Gaining from Giving w/c 26th February

Aim: To appreciate how giving can be a blessing to us and how giving helps us to be built up as disciples of Jesus.

Key verse: *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* Acts 20:36

Worship: Read *'Forth in the Peace of Christ we go'* (appendix) and take time to be still together before God, and be aware of His presence

Word

1. The key verse from Acts is often quoted rather ironically, when we find we are giving out more than we are getting. Is it trite or does giving money bring blessing? What might such a blessing be?(Consider also Luke 6: 38)
2. Jesus warned us that riches can prevent us from living a Godly life. (Read Matt 19: 16-26). Why do you think this is so?
3. Read the story of the rich fool in Luke 12: 13-21. What does it mean to be 'rich towards God?' Verse 15 says a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions; do we believe this in our hearts and in our heads? Is it possible to relate to this in our current consumer-driven society?
4. Does 'holding on to things of this world lightly' make us salt and light amongst our friends/ community? If not, could it? Do we truly desire such benefits? Do we feel that we get them from our giving to (a) our church family (b) elsewhere?
5. Our Sunday services focused on our outward giving, defined as money we give to support mission outside Dorking (see information sheet/ fact file). Discuss the following viewpoint: *'As a church family we should give money to mission outside Dorking as well as supporting our church family and mission to the local community.'*
6. Which Christian individuals or organisations do you know of that work outside Dorking, and which you or the church support/ you would like to support? Pray for these now, and finish with the campaign prayer.
- 7.

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, perhaps using the key verse again and the **Giving Prayer**

5. Getting Going with Giving w/c 5th March

Aim: To allow for any gaps in our understanding in the area of giving to be discussed, and to consider individually what type of giver we may be or would like to be.

Key Verse: “Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!” Rom 11:35-36

Worship: Use the key verse and thank God for all he has given us and all he is to us, even in hard times.

Word:

1. Consider the key verse. Giving to God seems very logical based on this concept; i.e. that everything comes from God. Wesley had a very clear view; he said ‘Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can’. What things hinder us from giving more?
2. Following the sermon series and what we know generally about the work of St Pauls, what are the gaps in our understanding of **what** we are giving to and how the money we give is being used?
3. Following the small group studies and what we generally know from the Bible about giving, what are the gaps in our understanding of **why** we are giving? (You may wish to consider Luke 17:34)
4. What do we know about the practicalities of **how** to give to St Paul’s? Are there gaps in our understanding of how we can give, and the needs of the church? (You may wish to consider 1 Cor 16:2 for thoughts on planned giving)

(Note to leaders; It would be very helpful if you could feedback on the above three discussions, and pass on any thoughts to the Giving To St Paul’s team. Thank you)

5. The diocesan advisors on Stewardship have done some work on types of giver, in different Anglican churches. A summary of this is appended to this booklet. Do we think that St Paul’s has all/ some of these types of giver?

Prayer

Spend some time in personal reflection on these types, and whether you can identify with any of them. Would you like to be a different kind of giver? Why/ why not? You may wish to make a few notes for further discussion with a friend/ partner, or for personal prayer.

On Sunday we heard about some of the community initiatives happening at St. Paul’s. Pray for the work that we are doing, that it will be fruitful in bringing something of Jesus into the community, and bring people closer to faith.

Pray for the Presentation sessions next week, and finish with the **Giving Prayer**

appendices

1 Further Resources

Websites –

<http://natstew.diochi.org.uk> (on this site you can get to a good article by John Truscott, Understanding Stewardship (would be good to use on Week 1/2 and to a helpful list of bible verses, via /content/10-teaching-worship)

www.christchurchware.co.uk/stewardship.htm general info on stewardship/ giving of money

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/funding/stewardship.html Useful for week 2

www.creditaction.org.uk This is a good site for anyone concerned about debt, either personally or wanting to help others/ understand the issues more. Via the site you can download some free publications on managing debt. The organisation has also published a very helpful Christian book on understanding debt, called *Your Money and Your Life*, by Keith Tondeur.

Another book that looks good on financial pressure that I have not yet read is *The Money Secret* by Rob Parsons

St. Paul's Prayer Programme; individual readings and an outline for prayer for each day of the campaign. Available in church.

2 Giving Prayer

It would be good if groups could try to use this each week, either at the start or the end of their time together.

Yours Lord is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; everything in heaven and on earth is yours. From you and through you and to you are all things. To you be the glory forever. Lord, you are good and your love endures for ever. All things come from you, give us grateful hearts to give back to you what is your own. Amen

Based on I Chronicles 29 and Romans 11

3 'First Fruits' prayer:

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
We your unworthy servants
Give you most humble and hearty thanks
For all your goodness and loving kindness.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
And all the blessings of this life;
But above all for your immeasurable love
In the redemption of the world
By our Lord Jesus Christ,
For the means of grace and for the hope of glory.
And give us, we pray,
Such a sense of all your mercies
That our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
And that we show forth your praise,
Not only with our lips but with our lives,
By giving ourselves to your service,
And by walking before you
In holiness and righteousness, all our days;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
To whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
Be honour and glory,
For ever and ever.*

Amen

4 Songs

*O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!*

*Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
Of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine:
Truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
These are the offerings to lay on his shrine.*

*These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
He will accept for the name that is dear;
Mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
Trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.*

*O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!*
J.S.B.Monsell (1811-75)

*Forth in the peace of Christ we go:
Christ in the world with joy we bring:
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true Kind.*

*Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth
The world of time to consecrate
The world of sin by grace to heal,
The world in Christ to re-created.*

*We are the church; Christ bids us show
That in his Church all nations find
Their hearth and home where Christ restores
True peace, true love, to all mankind.*

James Quinn SJ (b.1919)
©1969 Geoffrey Chapman (Cassell plc)

5 Steps in Giving

1 Survival

I give a bit when I'm asked because the church ought to be there in case I need it
The need is survival and there's a chance that the church might help. The relationship with the church is that I know it's there if I need it - all being well, I won't!

2 Supermarket

I'm happy to pay towards the cost of the bits of the church that I want and enjoy
The need is safety and by treating the church on my terms I feel safe and unchallenged. see myself as a customer.

3 Support

The work of the Church is important and so I'll support it
I have a need for belonging. I see myself as a member of the supporters'

4 Subscription

I see myself as a member and I wish to contribute to my fair share of the costs
The need is identity – I'm recognised and I'm playing my part.

5 Submission

My understanding of being a disciple is that I should put God first in my life
I see a deeper meaning in life and my giving responds to God and not just the needs of the Church.

6 Sacrifice

My Christian calling is to be Christ-like and so naturally I give joyfully and sacrificially – following Christ

Summary:

- **Survival**
I give a bit when I'm asked
- **Supermarket**
I pay for the bits I enjoy
- **Support**
The Church is important and I'll support it
- **Subscription**
I see myself as a member paying my dues
- **Submission**
I am a disciple with all that involves
- **Sacrifice**
I am called to be Christ-like and act accordingly

6 Information on Giving to St. Paul's

Thank you for your prayers and support for St. Paul's. We are so grateful for the generous giving from church members to cover the costs of our Church's work and outreach. As the church grows in vision so the need to give continues to grow with the need for 2006 being an estimated £237,000 to maintain our existing services (estimate based on Dec 05 data). This is equivalent to £4,560 per week, or £650 per day. The largest proportion of our giving is our Parish Share, which goes to the Guildford Diocese and includes the cost of our Vicar and Associate Vicar as well as contributions towards the mission and work of the Diocese.

In addition, we have other staff employed by the church –both full and part time– we have buildings to heat and maintain as well as funding the cost of our various activities. Finally, we want to regularly support Christian mission work both in the UK and around the world and aim to set aside 10% of our regular income (based on income levels of the previous year) plus giving at special services/ appeals, for this purpose. In 2005 our income was projected to be just short of £160,000, and the deficit between this and costs was to be covered by reserves. An early and generous response to our Giving to St Paul's campaign has eliminated the deficit. However, our estimated expenditure for 2006 is at least 50% more than our projected income for the year. During February and March 2006 we will be prayerfully asking members of our church family to review their planned giving to the church.

The most popular way to give to the church is via a regular standing order from your bank account. Others include CAF accounts (Charities Aid Foundation), Give As You Earn schemes offered by employers, or by cash or cheque in our Sunday collections. If you are a UK taxpayer, your giving can be boosted by 28% as we can reclaim basic rate tax under Gift Aid.

For further details on giving to St Paul's, please either contact Catherine Matthews (Tel 01306 631725) or the church office.

