

The background of the entire page is a close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of several stacks of gold coins. The coins are stacked in various heights and orientations, creating a textured, metallic surface. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the edges and ridges of the coins. The overall effect is one of wealth and value.

Giving *for Life*

The 6 Steps in Giving: Reflections and Challenges

**Through participation in an interactive session,
or by completing the comment sheet enclosed,
you will discover that your attitude to
giving to the church is likely to match
one of the 6 Steps in Giving.**

**This leaflet explains the different steps
and offers some reflections and challenges
to help us review our attitude,
motivation and commitment
to giving to God and our church.**

Survival

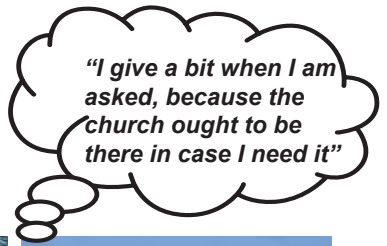
You feel strongly about the need for your Church to survive and to maintain its place in society.



They were only children but they knew that playing near water was dangerous. When Charlie fell in the pool his sister knew what to do. She picked up the lifebuoy and threw it near him. He grabbed it and kicked his way to the side where his sister dragged him from the water – safe and sound.

Lifebuoys. You hardly notice them until you need one. I would fight tooth and nail to make sure that they were available despite the fact that I hope I never need to use one.

Church can sometimes feel a bit like a lifebuoy. There in the background, for emergencies. I'm really glad its there for important times in people's lives and to support those who are having a rough time. I know it does a lot of good. I want the church to be there for me when I need it too but I realise it costs money to keep it going and I am willing to help out when I am asked, but I don't think it is necessary to get involved any further than that on a regular basis.



"I give a bit when I am asked, because the church ought to be there in case I need it"

Matthew 6:1-4



"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."



Am I ready to give money to help ensure that the church is there whenever I might need it for myself, my family or my friends? If so, how should I work out how much and how regularly is appropriate, given its value?

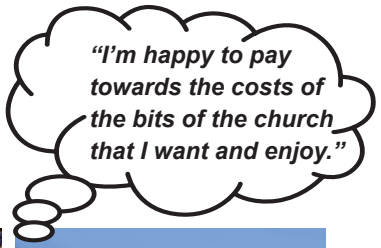


Your challenge...

The gospel message is about bringing 'good news to all' and the church is there to both proclaim it and help people to grasp it for themselves. The church is there for more than emergencies. **Why not take another look and invest in something that could be of real and lasting value to many people.**

Supermarket

You see a strong case for supporting the church activities which mean the most to you.



John 15: 16



Jesus said, 'You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.'

The right to choose is an important value in the 21st century. It's a matter of control. Whilst I have the opportunity to choose where I live, what I eat and where, who I work for, what I do in my leisure time, I have the power to control my world. But many people today cannot exercise their right to choose. They live in countries where they are led by dictators so any elections are rigged. They live in famine and drought infested areas. They are so badly abused they dare not choose for themselves only to please their abusers.

There is a well known saying that if a butterfly flaps its wings in China it changes the weather in New York. It means that our, seemingly insignificant choices can affect those we have never met before, for good or for ill. If I am only prepared to pay my way in church what ministry is available to those who cannot afford anything – such as the old and the young and the very poor?

Heavenly Father, I feel safe when I call the shots and make the choices. It is much harder to allow you some control of my life even though I believe you only want good for me.

Please help me to have confidence to trust you for my needs so that I can learn to be more generous with what you have given to me.

Amen.

Your challenge...

Jesus challenged his disciples to share what they had with others. If they had one cloak they were to give it to someone who had none. We are all reliant on each other.

Could I help support a ministry where I receive nothing but others might receive a great deal?



Am I ready to give enough money over and beyond my own needs so that someone else will gain the benefit?



Support

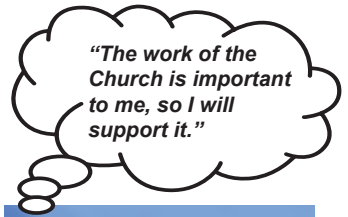
You believe strongly in the need to support the church, including its work in the community.



Every weekend hundreds of parents stand at touchlines watching their children play football, rugby, cricket or some other sport. For many of them, this became a new way of life when their child took up the sport. Some may have played themselves in their youth but many of them have never played themselves and have no intention of doing so. They are happy to stand and applaud others. They are staunch supporters of their children's team and they would do anything to help the match take place, even if they are not playing themselves. They put themselves out for the team, giving lifts, washing kit even coaching on occasions. They are committed, but committed supporters. Supporting the church is important. I might not go very often myself, but I feel strongly enough that it should be there for others. So I make sure that I support the church. I am a member, just not a very active member.




Am I ready to convert my support for the church into a regular financial commitment which enables it to do the things which make up its mission? Or do I prefer my financial support to be for a particular project or activity which is dear to me? And do I know what these things cost?



"The work of the Church is important to me, so I will support it."

1 Chronicles 29: 1-5



"Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God - gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colours, and all kinds of fine stone and marble - all of these in large quantities. Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?"

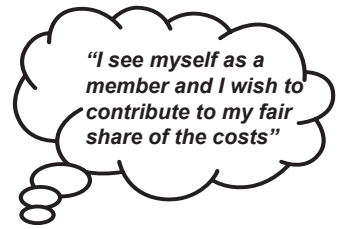
Your challenge...

I recognise that the church is important for so many people and it cares for those who cannot care for themselves. I am grateful that Christians are prepared to go out of their way to help others and that the church enables that support to happen.

What can I do to help both financially and practically?

Subscription

You recognise strongly in the need to pay for “your share” as a member of your church and a partner in its vision.



When we are committed to an organisation, we agree to pay the annual subscription costs. We recognise the value of belonging to that group and that ultimately members carry the responsibility for the costs involved. It is all part of being committed. By contributing to the church on a regular basis, we underpin our sense of belonging and commitment to its upkeep and ongoing work.

Dear God, I love my church and I am committed to it. I want to express my commitment in the way I support what is going on there.

Help me to have a generous heart in understanding and supporting those who exercise authority within the church and have responsibility for maintaining and developing its mission.

In Jesus' name. Amen



And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But 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.

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:1-12



Have I taken the trouble to discover how much it costs for our church to carry out its mission? Have I thought and prayed about how much I could contribute towards that cost, having regard to my own financial circumstances?

Submission

You readily submit to God's will and teaching for us to offer up his gifts to the church as part of our discipleship.



'Submit!' shouts the wrestler to his weakened opponent. 'I give up' wails the pitiful creature pinned to the ground, out of breath and writhing in agony.

'Do you submit to Christ as Lord?' asks the Vicar of every godparent and parent at a child's baptism. 'I submit to Christ' each replies.

Submission is about recognising a higher power and giving in to that power. Submitting to Christ means putting him first in my life. My desires do not dominate my life but my response to Jesus Christ does. Jesus is in charge of my life and my giving responds to God and his mission rather than just meeting the needs of the Church.



Is my professed submission to Christ in my life reflected in how I deal with my money so that it is used first for his mission and his purpose for us? What would submission mean as I look at my income, my wealth and how I spend it?

Loving Jesus, I give you my life and I submit to your Lordship over it. I trust you with all that I am and all that I could become and know that as I submit to your will you will choose the very best for my life.

In response I will give you my will, my possessions and all that I have authority over, so that all will be directed by you and for the good of the Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

"My understanding of being a disciple is that I should put God first in my life"

Genesis 32: 24-32



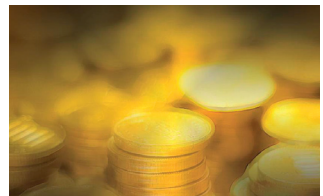
Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'

The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered.

Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'

Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there. The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.



Sacrifice

You believe strongly that sacrificial giving is a natural response to the generosity God has shown to us.



We live in a time where 'unless we look after ourselves, no one else will'. We push and shove to get to the front of the queue, not minding who we tread on to get to the top, working hard to the detriment of our families and our health, and to achieve success. We strain to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps but is it worth the effort?

Jesus had it all - a place in heaven next to his Father and honour and respect to which he was entitled. He did not need to strive for recognition and success, it was his to command but he turned his back on it all and gave it up to become a human baby, born illegitimate, to a teenage girl. He became a refugee and was brought up in a very undesirable area of the Middle East where he spent his ministry touching undesirables, healing the sick, performing miracles and pointing towards the Kingdom of God. He was falsely accused and crucified. He did all of that for us – so that we could see just how much he loved us...We recognise that we cannot repay Jesus' amazing sacrifice for us, but we can give praise and thanks by offering ourselves and all that he has given to us in humble adoration.

Lord Jesus, I recognise that I can do nothing to repay you for what you have done for me. But I give you myself and all that I have in humble obedience. What I have belongs to you and I ask you to help me be a good steward of all that is yours and joyfully share what you ask me to share and give what you ask me to give. In humble obedience and joyful praise. Amen

"I am called to be Christ-like, and so naturally I give both joyfully and sacrificially – following Jesus Christ"

Philippians 2: 1-8



If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!



When I consider the sacrifice Jesus made for us, what is its practical

influence on the decisions I make about money and other possessions?

Through giving his life for us, Jesus provided the ultimate demonstration of God's generosity. Giving is at the centre of God's character - God gives us life, and his giving is renewed daily.



In what ways have you expressed your thanks for all that God has given to you?

When considering matters concerned with giving and generosity many Christians find that they are on a lifelong journey. They see that their thinking about money and what they should give has changed over time.



Where are you on your journey of generous giving?

When we give we give life. Regular committed giving by church members enables the church to carry out God's mission in the world. Church and charitable giving gives new life, new vision, new hope.



Do you give regularly? Do you give generously?

Christians are challenged to be generous in every aspect of their lives. It's not only about giving money, but offering hospitality, giving time and using our skills - in our churches, but also in our homes, our workplaces and communities. Giving is the outworking of faith.



In which area do you find it easiest to give? Which do you need to work at?

What can I do?

Give thanks:

- Give thanks for everything with which God has blessed you.
- Do this regularly, as the more often we give thanks, the more we realise how much we've been given.

Give regularly:

- Commit or re-commit to giving money regularly to the church and to other charities.
- **Complete a Gift Aid form and return to your church's Planned Giving team.**
- Review your giving in other areas, such as time or hospitality.

Give generously:

- General Synod has challenged church members as an initial target to give 5% (or £1 in £20) of their after-tax income to and through the church, and a similar amount to other work that helps to build God's kingdom.

Give yourself:

- Be involved with the organisations you support.
- Spend time praying for the work of your church and that of other causes you support.
- Keep up-to-date with what they are doing so that your prayers and your giving are properly informed.

On behalf of your local church ...THANK YOU for your continued support.