

Encouraging a Parish in Giving

A training module for
Parish Giving Links

Produced by
The Christian
Stewardship Committee
of the Archbishops' Council and
The Diocese of Lichfield



Introduction

Background

For many parishes, issues of Christian Giving and Stewardship have been dealt with on an infrequent, “as needed” basis. All too often, parishes have relied on Diocesan Advisers to provide input directly to assist a parish develop its giving.

The National Stewardship Committee has established a number of “good practice groups” to seek to equip the Church with tools to develop Stewardship and Giving across the Church. One key strategy underpinning this is the development of networks of Parish Giving Links, resourced to encourage their parish or benefice in good stewardship practices. There is significant statistical evidence to show that parishes with Parish Giving Links are able to grow their giving faster, and hence be better equipped to resource their mission.

This training module is aimed at providing a sound base of knowledge for those taking on a “Parish Giving Link” role, and is based on three elements:

- Personal - It is important that all who are seeking to encourage giving and stewardship have spent some time reflecting on their own personal understanding of stewardship and its impact on their gifts, money and possessions.
- Theological - A brief overview on what the Bible has to say about God’s generosity to us, our responsibility as stewards, tithing, the grace of giving, discipleship, attitudes to giving, generosity etc.
- Practical - What should Parish Giving Links do? What resources are there to help? How should we appropriately challenge Church people with the principles and practice of Christian giving?

How might this module be used?






- The layout of the material assumes that there will be a session leader..
- There will be too much material for most groups - some material can be left for attendees to read through afterwards.
- There is an accompanying PowerPoint presentation available at www.parishresources.org.uk/giving/PGOtraining.ppt
- All course members should be given a copy of this document.
- In the third section, some local information should be added about your own diocese and its funding.

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Acknowledgements

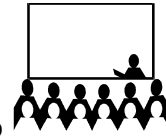
This booklet has been adapted from the one compiled by the Revd Stephen Lynas (*Bath & Wells Diocese*), the Revd Canon Mel Smith (*Worcester Diocese*), Mr Paul Winstanley (*Ripon and Leeds Diocese*) and Mr John Preston (*National Stewardship & Resources Officer*). Thanks are also due to the former National Stewardship Officer, Mr Robin Stevens.

| Key to icons | |
|---|---|
|  | Presentation to the group |
|  | Buzz groups |
|  | Plenary discussion |
|  | For personal reflection or work at home |
|  | Add in local information |

Section 1 – Money and Me

It is important that those who are encouraging giving within a Parish have spent some time reflecting on their own discipleship and giving.

1.1 Personal discipleship



Our teaching and example need to demonstrate that stewardship is not simply about funding the church's mission (and maintenance...). It is a lifestyle choice, brought about by moving into fuller and more faithful discipleship.

In this sense, the parables about talents and the Old Testament understanding of the eventual ownership of property are a direct challenge to our consumerist lifestyle. We live in a society that is always building bigger barns. (Luke 12.18)

So part of our teaching ministry must be to help people see that they make choices about all their spending. Advertising, peer pressure, 'quality of life' aspirations and TV makeover shows all influence our choices towards 'spend, spend, spend'. Yet the gospel is about 'share, share, share'...

So we have a counter-cultural message to deliver. Many people simply do not see the point in giving money away, whether to Africa or to their church. Or, if they do, they see 'charity' as handing out quite small amounts, and earning a warm glow. So, as well as encouraging the habit, we need to educate people about the size of their giving as well. We also need to think about children and young people. How will they learn the grace of giving if no one shows it to them?

Some of the choices are:

- ♦ How much should I give?
- ♦ Who should I give to?
- ♦ On what basis can I decide?

For discussion:



Divide the whole group into pairs or buzz groups. Invite them to think how they might answer a church member who was asking the above questions about choices.

Re-form as a plenary group, and gather together some suggestions for the answers to the questions arising from the discussions in buzz groups.

Choice 1 – To whom do we give?

Most Christians are not content to give solely to their local church.

- Many will have particular Christian interests or associations, perhaps voluntary societies, mission agencies, development projects, etc.
- There are also likely to be a number of other, secular charities, which we wish to support. A wide range of causes may appeal to us: heritage, conservation, medical care or research, education, children and so on.

They want to continue to support those people and activities on a regular basis.

But there can be negative reasons, too. Sometimes church members may disagree with the Church's policy on certain issues, may not share the priorities, or simply misunderstand what the Church is doing with the money given to it. There are many reasons why people may feel unable to give the church wholehearted financial support at a particular moment.

There are therefore some hard choices to be made. How do I divide my giving between Christian bodies whose concern is:

- ♦ Local?
- ♦ National?
- ♦ International?

How much giving should be to explicitly Christian bodies and how much to charities whose organisation is 'secular'?

It may be helpful to use a simple grid to reflect on the spread of your own giving. An example is below. It shows that Stephen Smith gives 80% of his giving to Christian causes.

Stephen Smith's Giving Grid:

| | Christian | | Other | | Cash totals |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Local | St Paul's PCC | £750 | Barn Owl Trust; | £100 | £875 |
| | | | Village Hall Playgroup | £25 | |
| National | Scripture Union (youth camps) | £200 | RNLI | £50 | £250 |
| Inter-National | Christian Aid; Zambia Church Link | £200 £50 | WWF | £125 | £375 |
| Cash Totals | | £1,200 80% | | £300 20% | £1,500 |

There are so many calls on our giving. Church people are bombarded with professional publicity from large charities, with heart-rending pictures and stories. It is important to have a tool which can help us think through true priorities, rather than simply succumb to a good mail shot.

Choice 2 – How much should I give?

This is the oldest, and the hardest, question in the stewardship book. Some will say there is no question about it: we are called to tithe our income. But, as experience of parish discussions shows, this may mean different things to different people:

- ♦ A tithe of every pound you are paid?
- ♦ A tithe of *take-home* pay?
- ♦ A tithe of income after basic living costs are taken into account?

Modern-day tithing practice is said by some to have only come into being in this country between the two World Wars, under the influence of American thought. There is also the question of a cultural hangover from agricultural tithes paid to the Church, still felt in some rural areas.

This is not the place to go into the Old Testament understanding of tithing, or the way in which the New Testament handles it. It may be wise, however, to spend some time reflecting on this, and coming to terms with your own understanding. There are two other elements of which you may like to be aware:

- ♦ The concept of proportionate giving is different from Old Testament tithing.
- ♦ The official Church of England giving target is 5% of take-home pay to and through the local church, leaving (perhaps) 5% for other causes.

Most giving in the Church of England does not approach the level of tithing (on any definition). Those involved with encouraging giving in churches are challenged to encourage greater generosity without inducing inappropriate guilt.

One approach that might be followed is something like: *tithing is not a rule for you to slavishly follow. It is a choice you can make. You must be able to justify your choice about a level of giving to*

- ♦ *God*
- ♦ *your household*
- ♦ *your bank manager*

Whatever choice you make, a prayerful choice will liberate you. You should stick to it. And review it in a year's time.

Choice 3 – On what basis should I decide?

It would be interesting to know how people decide how much to give to the Church. There might be a number of motivating factors. Do they say their prayers about it? Do they look at their bank statements first? Do they simply put an amount on the plate that 'looks about right'? In other words, are they *principled* givers or haphazard? Planned or unplanned?

Perhaps two important factors might be:

- a) the need of the church to resource its mission and ministry.
- b) the giver's internal desire to be a generous steward of what God has given him or her.

Each church member needs to make up their own mind.

There are other choices which we have not discussed here:

- ♦ How often should I give?
- ♦ Is it right for me to give in other ways as well e.g. by giving our time and skills?
- ♦ If I can't give as much as I want to now, can I give later e.g. through a legacy, or when I have greater wealth?

In all of these choices, we want to affirm decisions that are made on the basis of principles, rather than knee-jerk responses. Money is an important spiritual issue in a society that is rich. Understanding what the Bible says about money is important, as is spending quality time thinking through how this relates to our lives.

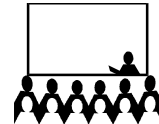
For personal reflection at home:

- What has been your experience with money? Has it left scars on you?
- Do you handle your own finances well? How often do you pray about your finances or about financial decisions?
- Do you seek help when you need it or, for example, do you leave bills unopened in a drawer?
- How comfortable are you with your own giving to the church and other charitable activities?
- What does your own giving grid look like? Are you satisfied with that distribution?



Section 2 – What the Bible says

There is a common perception that Christian stewardship is about balancing the books, keeping the show on the road and paying for the building and the parish share. However, in reality, Christian giving is a fundamental aspect of Christian discipleship and needs to be seen in the light of God's mission in creation. It is not the Church's euphemism for fund raising.



For discussion:



Divide the whole group into pairs or buzz groups.

Invite them to brainstorm a list of passages in the Gospels which relate to money and possessions. Then, if they have time, to make a second list of passages in either the Old Testament or the Epistles which relate to money and possessions.

2.1 Salvation and Stewardship

The Bible contains accounts of God's dealings with creation - with humanity in particular and, in the Old Testament, particularly God's relationship with the Jews. We find stories of how God set about making provision for the restoration of fallen humanity, beginning with Abraham and leading up to and including the ministry and person of Jesus. This is the history of salvation - for the Christian focused particularly on Jesus, his life, death and resurrection and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit.

Alongside and interwoven with the above is the matter of stewardship; the matter of how humanity was given responsibility for the created order and how she was to manage it. The first and second commands in Scripture are, in fact, stewardship commands - 'Go forth and multiply' and 'Look after the garden' - because both are about how humankind is to steward the resources given it by God. In fact, the majority of biblical commands tell us how we should live out the relationship that we have with God the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit.

The two great messages of Scripture might be summarised by the questions:

- ♦ How do I get into a relationship with God?
- ♦ In the light of that relationship, how should I live?

However, one great problem is that we are often trying to teach the answer to the second question to people who have not yet experienced the necessarily prior relationship with the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit.

What *is* Christian stewardship?

- ♦ It's inclusive not exclusive - i.e. it's not just about money.
- ♦ The whole Christian life - it's about discipleship, learning to follow Christ.
- ♦ It's about using and managing our God-given resources appropriately and responsibly.

Whilst it is not exclusively about money, money is the aspect of stewardship we will focus on as Parish Giving Links. Archbishop Rowan Williams has said: "What we do with our money proclaims who we think we are - whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not. All our actions in some degree reveal us; why should our economic life be different? Why should this too not be an area in which we help to shape our eternal destiny, a matter of sin or holiness?"

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If you are running a longer session, you might like to open up a brief discussion on this. To what extent do we think that how we handle our money is a spiritual issue?

2.2 The Old Testament

The Old Testament is probably quarried by preachers for two purposes:

- ♦ **General teaching** on stewardship of creation and wealth (e.g. Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 8; 1 Chronicles 29:14 - the 'offertory text').
- ♦ **Specific teaching points** (e.g. Leviticus 27:30 in support of tithing; Haggai 1:1-9 on restoring the edifice; Malachi 3:10 on 'the whole tithe').

The general teaching is not too difficult to deal with, but there is a serious question about the specific teaching points. How much weight can these individual Old Testament texts stand?

Does the cultural context of ancient Israel speak directly to ours? How can we interpret one prophet's words into our society? Different traditions handle interpretation of the Old Testament differently. Perhaps we need to have a better understanding of the Old Testament context and the way in which Christians can use and understand it. The tithe is a very specific example of this.

One important element we can draw from David is the encapsulation of the fact that we, the earth and all that we have, are created by, and a gift from, God. David prayed "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." 1 Chronicles 29:14

2.3 The Gospels

When Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:24), he was telling a joke, but he was not joking! In general, in the UK we are rich. We may be able to find others who are richer than we are, but in comparison with the world's population, we are blessed with wealth. Minimum Income benefits provided by the state (at least £4,800) will put us in the top 15% of the world's population, and to get into the top 1%, we only need an income of £26,000 and we are not even a higher rate taxpayer.

Money is a spiritual issue, and as Christians in a western economy, we need to think it through. Here are five passages that may be helpful:

- ♦ Jesus tells us plainly: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) and "You cannot serve both God and money." (Matthew 6:24)
- ♦ He describes the man who had made a lot of money and intended to use it exclusively for his own comfort as 'a fool' because 'a person's true life is not made up of the things he owns' (Luke 12:15 and 20).
- ♦ Jesus teaches in his parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) that even those with quite small resources have a responsibility to put to good use what they have.
- ♦ The episode with Zaccheus teaches us the importance of integrity in how we handle money.
- ♦ Jesus commends the generosity of the woman who gave two small coins. (Luke 21:1-4)

2.4 The Epistles

Jesus did not talk at all about funding a community's activities. So, frequently, teaching on giving has majored on St Paul. The key texts have been:

- 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 - the Macedonian example of generosity and 'first to the Lord.'
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 - "on the first day of the week, each of you..."
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 - "cheerful giver"

This is set within a context of mutual support - the early churches clearly believed strongly that they should support one another (Acts 2:22-47; 4:32-37).

Paul teaches clearly in his letter to the Romans (Chapter 13, verses 5-7) that we must fulfil our civil obligations. This echoes the words of Jesus: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." Mark 12:17

2.5 Principles for Giving

Drawing on these passages, we can draw five principles about Christian giving:

1. We give as a response to what God has given to us. In creation, through Jesus, and through the Holy Spirit, God has given us everything that we have, and all that we are. Our giving is a response to this.
2. We give in grace, and not through law. The Old Testament tithe was required by law. The New Testament commends proportionate giving, and we may give away 10% of our income, but this is freely given. It is not 10% for God, 90% for me!
3. Our giving is a part of the management of all of our money. We cannot give generously in one area, and lack integrity in fulfilling our other responsibilities.
4. We are called to give generously. The example of the woman donating all she had, Zaccheus giving away 50% of his income, show that for some of us, a tithe of 10% of our income will not represent true generosity; whilst for others that will be truly generous.
5. We give as a priority. Our giving is from the "first-fruits" not from what is left over. Our giving to God is an indicator of what we think of Him, and our thankfulness for what He has done.

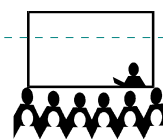
For personal reflection at home:

- You might like to set aside some time to read through the passages referred to in this section, and reflect on them.
- Some additional passages are given at the end to give you a handy reference check of biblical material.
- The books in the booklist at the back give an opportunity to spend more time considering what the Bible has to say about Christian Giving.



Section 3 – Practicalities

The task of a Parish GivingLink will vary from place to place. The resources in this section are designed to equip you to reflect on how you will do the job in your situation, and equip you with some tools to help. Remember, as well as giving our congregations the financial facts, we have to put them in a Christian context and connect them with the life of discipleship.



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3.1 What does a Parish Giving Link do?

Learning from dioceses, which have run a Parish Giving Link scheme for some time, suggests that the PGL role should ideally be carried out by someone concentrating solely on this task. However, in a number of parishes, the role will need to be combined with another role. In this case, it is preferable to combine with the job of Gift Aid Officer, rather than Treasurer.

The first column in the table below summarises the key tasks that need undertaking within a parish relating to finance and giving:

| TASK | 3 person Team | 2 Person Team |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| ♦ Responsible for book-keeping, and preparation of financial updates to the PCC. | T | T |
| ♦ Preparation of Annual Report and Accounts, and working with auditor / independent examiner. | T | T |
| ♦ Ensuring the parish adopts appropriate cash management and banking arrangements. | T | T |
| ♦ Developing a Budget, and reporting progress against it. | T | T |
| ♦ Communicating the budget in narrative form | PGL / T | T |
| ♦ Encouraging Teaching on Giving and Stewardship | PGL | PG |
| ♦ Organising Annual Renewals of pledged planned giving | PGL | PG |
| ♦ Promoting Giving within the parish through circulating leaflets, producing magazine articles, resourcing home groups etc. | PGL | PG |
| ♦ Ensuring the church thanks its planned givers personally at least once a year. | PGL / GA | PG |
| ♦ Encouraging Tax Efficient Giving | PGL / GA | PG |
| ♦ Talking with individual church members about giving | PGL / GA | PG |
| ♦ Administering the Gift Aid scheme and keeping records | GA | PG |
| ♦ Making a Tax Claim. | GA | PG |

The right hand two columns provide some thoughts on how the tasks could be split when there are teams of two or three volunteers. For three volunteers, the tasks labelled “T” are the responsibility of the Treasurer, the ones labelled “PGL” should be carried out by the Parish Giving Links, and the “GA” tasks are for a Gift Aid officer. Where there are only two people, The Parish Giving Officer role and the Gift Aid Officer role have been combined into one labelled “Planned Giving” (“PG”).

For personal reflection at home:

- We recommend that you meet with others involved with financial work in the parish, as well as with the Vicar, to decide what your role will cover. It may be helpful to summarise this in a short note, which can be circulated to the PCC.
- You might like to browse through the section “Top Tips for a new PGO” contributed by Parish Giving Officers in the Sheffield Diocese.



Essentially, there are four common elements to the role, The 4 Key Tasks, which we will explore now:

- Promoting Christian Giving and Stewardship (3.2)
- Communicating financial information (3.3)
- Annual Renewal (3.4)
- Ensuring the church says “Thank you” to its members once a year. (3.5)

3.2 Promoting Stewardship

Probably the most vital element of the role of Parish Giving Link is to generally promote Christian Giving and Stewardship. What is important is that there is a steady, gentle flow of communication. This is very much better than a “big bang” at the beginning with a very long pause afterwards. There are a variety of channels for such communication:

- distributing leaflets on giving.
- encouraging the clergy to teach on giving regularly. This need not always be a complete sermon, but a short point dropped into another sermon.
- making legacy leaflets available.
- putting an article on giving or legacies into your parish magazine.
- helping communicate what the money that has been given, has been used for and the mission benefits of the money given to the church.
- reporting back how much the church has given to mission causes.

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What is important here is that our teaching flows from the biblical teaching in the previous section - our motivation for giving is from our principles, and as a response to what God has given to us.

There are a range of resources to help you on the Lichfield Diocesan Intranet at: <http://www.intranet.lichfield.anglican.org/pfu/index.htm> and on the web at www.parishresources.org.uk. However, there is nothing more powerful than developing your own - perhaps based on examples from other parishes. It is always good to offer local examples of, say, how legacies have been used to further the work of your church, or how your church is funding mission work, whether in the parish or elsewhere.

3.3 Communicating Financial Information

People have varying understanding of what the Church is, and how it works. On any PCC you may find people who think of the Church as a:

- ♦ business - a charity whose accounts must be 'in the black'. Spending must be for specific reasons and regulated against income at all times.
- ♦ place of escape - where they can go to pray, sing and worship. Very little money is required for such things to happen.
- ♦ supportive community - whose people and activities help them through their life. They want to 'chip in' to pay for necessary costs as best they can.
- ♦ part of the fabric of the community - always there, to be repaired and beautified as appropriate. Money will be raised for the purpose when it's needed.
- ♦ missionary organisation - rather than 'spending on ourselves', funding must be directed towards helping the poor, evangelism and advocating a different set of values to those seen in society at large.

Set against these personal understandings, different people will have widely different views about budgets and financial priorities. The teaching on Christian giving outlined in the previous section is important, but so too is communicating how the Church is spending the money, and demonstrating that it too is exercising good stewardship. Since a Church might always be expected to have a vision which is larger than its current resources, increasing giving and making decisions about spending priorities are both important. Communicating the budget to the wider church, and not just the PCC, is a good way of demonstrating this corporate stewardship. A "narrative" budget simply means focusing on the outcomes of the budget and what the money will achieve, rather than simply presenting a column of figures (see the Narrative Budget pages on our Intranet).

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In particular, there will be a range of elements to a parish budget which may compete for priority:

- ♦ Paying the Parish Share
- ♦ Maintaining the fabric of the building
- ♦ Supporting external mission and charitable organisations
- ♦ Funding current and desired parish projects and ministry

For most parishes, the Parish Share (or equivalent phrase) will be one of the largest elements on the budget. Yet its link with funding the clergy, and hence the mission and ministry of the church, is not well understood.

Parish Share in many dioceses is based on the model of the Church as an inter-dependent grouping of congregations, who support each other financially. This is true both between parishes and between dioceses. Parish Share is the way in which we provide resources for the ministry and mission of the local church.

- ♦ A fund in which costs are pooled and every parish shares
- ♦ A contribution to the cost of providing ministry . . .
- ♦ Not just in 'our parish' but in every parish
 - *Rich or poor*
 - *Urban or rural*
 - *Confident or struggling*

Without this inter-dependent system, there would be no stipendiary ministry in large swathes of the diocese.

It may be appropriate to explain the local Share calculation method here to complete the 'jigsaw' of information.



Spend a little time discussing Parish Share. It is important that PGLs understand;

- a) that there is no simple, universally fair method of allocating share amongst parishes, and
- b) how the Diocese uses the money. There still persists in many churches a misunderstanding of how Parish Share is used.

3.4 Annual Renewal

Once a year, it is sensible to encourage people to review their giving. Some churches or dioceses may wish to do this using an annual “Stewardship Sunday”.

This annual renewal of giving should normally be accompanied by:

- i) Appropriate teaching on Christian Giving principles and
- ii) An expression of the current and future financial needs of the parish i.e. how it links with the parish’s vision for the future.

The ideal scenario is that this is not the only time that either is presented in the Church’s calendar, and that both elements are further communication of known material. .

In line with (i) above, all concerned should be encouraged to review their giving according to the established theological principles. This will provide an opportunity to those who were not party to recent campaigns or renewals to do so, and at the same time allow others to modify their giving to allow for changes in circumstance that have occurred over the past year. It is right to encourage everyone to take the opportunity to review their giving prayerfully even if they finish up with a ‘no change’ situation.

All should be asked to fill in ‘pledge’ forms after reviewing their giving, as this will provide not only a commitment by the person concerned, but also an accurate forecast of the total income to be expected in the year ahead.

There are a number of ways that the budgetary information can be presented, according to the parish situation;

- 1) If the parish has recently undergone a major giving initiative, and the projected giving is in line with the budget, i.e. no increase is required, it is important to communicate this. This is probably a simple communication via letter or from the front of church with the following elements:
 - ◆ Thank you

- ◆ We're on track to meet our budget.
- ◆ Exciting things that are planned to happen this year including.....
- ◆ This couldn't be achieved without your generosity.

2) The second level of annual renewal is for inflationary increases. If your budget is broadly in line with last year, with increases largely due to inflation, then this can be presented as such. Most people will receive an annual increase in wages, pension or benefits, and those who give by standing order or by weekly envelopes may need reminding to increase their giving in line with this. Elements of the communication include:

- ◆ Thank you
- ◆ Budget overview - costs rising in line with inflation.
- ◆ To avoid a deficit, we need to ask donors if they would be willing to increase their giving in line with inflation too.
- ◆ Link the mission of the Church with the generosity of donors.

3) Where there is an exciting new project that the parish wants to undertake, it can be an opportunity to present this, and to ask people to consider increasing their giving to pay for this. (Best practice is to avoid creating a special or "restricted" fund for the additional item - merely to say that the new youth worker will cost an additional £10,000, and therefore we would ask you to consider whether you could increase your monthly or weekly giving to contribute towards this additional cost in the budget.) This will probably require a letter presenting the facts for people to take away, together with presentation of the need from the front of church. Again, the communication should include:

- ◆ Thanking people for current giving
- ◆ Explaining the new initiative and its benefits and costs, linking the vision and mission of the Church with biblical principles.
- ◆ Inviting people to go away and prayerfully consider whether they are able to increase their giving to contribute towards this.

4) The final level of annual renewal is a giving campaign. This is likely to involve at least four elements:

- ◆ a more major presentation of the financial needs of the church
- ◆ indications of current giving,
- ◆ teaching on Christian giving
- ◆ opportunity for personal prayer about giving, followed by a pledge

Your Diocesan Stewardship Adviser will be able to provide further advice on how this might be tackled. There are lots of web resources on this, including www.givinginrace.org - a site developed by the Diocese of Liverpool, but made freely available to the national Church.

3.5 Saying “Thank You”

We would recommend that Churches should say thank you annually to those who give regularly to the work of the church.

This is important to show that donors are valued, and provides an opportunity to communicate what the church has done with the money donated. This letter can also act as a statement for higher rate taxpayers who can claim further tax relief through their tax return.

It doesn't matter whether this letter comes from the Gift Aid Officer or from the Parish Giving Officer provided that :

- i) It does come!
- ii) It comes from someone who the donor expects to have access to details about their giving. Confidentiality should not be breached.

Sample letter templates are on the web at www.parishresources.org.uk in the giving section.

For discussion:



Divide the whole group into groups of about 4 people. Invite them to think how they might tackle the role of Parish Giving Link and to share ideas on what they could do to encourage giving in their parish.

Re-form as a plenary group and share some of the suggestions. A number of questions may also arise, which can either be tackled in the larger group, or left until afterwards.

One of the purposes of this discussion is to enable PGLs to feel that they can contact one another to share ideas and thoughts to build up mutual support.

3.6 Resources

Your continued support and development is important. A range of resources and training opportunities will be available to you.

In addition to our Intranet, these include :

- i) Web resources at www.parishresources.org.uk
- ii) Books for personal study. A booklist is provided at the back.
- iii) The PFU will offer periodic meetings or conferences to enable PGLs to share stories and to learn about developments relating to giving. These will be very valuable opportunities to network with others doing the same job.
- iv) You will already have received leaflets to update you on the latest news and ideas, including ‘Link Up’.

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Section 4 – Final Remarks

In closing this session, we want to affirm you in the role that you are taking on. The role of Parish Giving Link is an important one for three reasons :

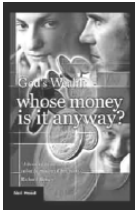
i) In our earlier section on the Gospels we saw that money is a spiritual issue. Whilst our giving is only a part of our consideration of this issue, it is a very important part. The impetus that you are able to provide may be very helpful in enabling people to tackle this spiritual issue.

ii) As well as maintaining our buildings, and paying for clergy through parish share, our giving is instrumental in funding the local mission of the Church. As we increase the income of our Churches, so too the pool of money for mission projects increases. As Parish Giving Link, you are helping increase the capacity of your Church for mission.

iii) For many churches, tackling giving is a daunting task. Having someone who is willing to assume the role of Parish Giving Link means that they are taking a step forward in addressing the issue. Whilst it is vital that you are not left unsupported - clergy must play their role, especially in teaching, nevertheless the appointment of a Parish Giving Link can mean that a church can be more confident in the way that it approaches this important subject.

Book list

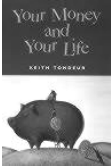
Gods wealth : Whose Money is it Anyway?



by Neil Hood; published by Authentic; £8.99
1-85078-567-8

A practical and well-researched look at the subject of money and who owns it. Money plays a vital role in all our lives - whether we have much or little; whether we love it or view it biblically. Neil Hood delves into this key subject, looking at people's current view on money, their understanding of it in terms of ownership and attitudes towards materialism. The book combines biblical teaching and practical case studies to explore the subject of money and who actually owns it!

Your money and your life



by Keith Tondeur; published by SPCK Triangle; £6.99
0-2810-4943-2

This book looks in detail at all aspects of biblical teaching on money and demonstrates that by handling money in line with Christian principles we can enjoy contentment and freedom from the fear which affects so much of our financial thinking.

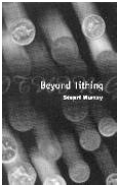
Yours, Lord – a handbook of Christian Stewardship



by Michael Wright; published by Mowbray; £10.99
0-264-67275-5

This book helps us with our attitude to money, lifestyle, and generosity; gives guidance on making a mission statement, coping with change, personal appraisal and action.

Beyond Tithing



by Stuart Murray; published by Paternoster Press; £14.99
1-8422-7000-1

A radical examination of the contemporary practice of tithing in which the author argues that the current legalistic approach alienates us from Jesus and is far from Christian. After an examination of tithing in the Old Testament and in Christian history, he calls for churches to explore more creative ways of developing communities of justice and generosity that really are good news to the poor.

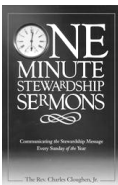
Generosity



By Michael Wakely; published by Intervarsity Press; £5.99
1-8447-4020-X

Mike Wakely shows how God's generosity can be the starting-point for our own. He explores how to have a big-hearted attitude, how to choose a lifestyle that routinely goes the extra mile and how to make our financial giving a source of joy to others and ourselves.

One Minute Stewardship Sermons



edited by Charles Cloughen; published by Morehouse; £9.99
0-8192-1720-4

Short, concise, inspirational meditations on stewardship for year round use. *One Minute Stewardship Sermons* presents a collection of messages that can be used at the offertory each Sunday, incorporated into the regular sermon, or printed in the pew sheet.

Tips on Being a Parish Giving Link

A questionnaire carried out amongst Sheffield Diocese's Parish Giving Director network asked respondents for their top tip for someone becoming a Parish Giving Link. Their responses included:

Team-working:

- ♦ Working in a team with treasurer and gift aid secretary works best.
- ♦ Support - shared wisdom, shared working gives clear overall picture
- ♦ Get the clergy on your side... if you can!
- ♦ Work within a finance team
- ♦ Have support and encouragement from the clergy

Approach

- ♦ Do not be afraid of talking about money
- ♦ Justify need for parish share - explain what it is, and what it pays for.
- ♦ You need to be or become aware of your congregation's "felt" needs
- ♦ Giving is a response to God's love; we do not give to pay the bills.
- ♦ Make sure givers are thanked for money and other gifts.
- ♦ Find out why people give, and why they don't.
- ♦ Pray and think through carefully what you are to say!!
- ♦ Be sure that the message that you give is that we are giving to God "through the church" not just "for the church"
- ♦ Maintain your interest

Personal Style

- ♦ Be open and not critical
- ♦ Be a good listener to individuals (everyone has their own worry, concern or difficulty.)
- ♦ Get to know your congregation - develop relationship with each person. Also with non-attending parish members who are or are not regular givers
- ♦ Speak and listen with love and understanding.
- ♦ Be persistent, encouraging and positive. Be positive about "the meaning of giving"
- ♦ Keep reflecting on what/who God is asking us to be.
- ♦ Enjoy what you do.

Knowledge

- ♦ Become totally familiar with regulations relating to gift aid
- ♦ Attend Diocesan events on Stewardship.
- ♦ Find plenty of information/input in general to widen understanding/leadership

Expectations

- ♦ It takes a long time to persuade people to change their ways/thinking, if they ever do.
- ♦ Do not expect immediate results, take time and persistence to change attitudes towards regular giving
- ♦ This is a great challenge, but with great rewards
- ♦ Be prepared for a surprise.
- ♦ Don't be surprised by the giving attitude of various people in the Church and thank everyone of them.

Further copies of this booklet may be obtained from: Kim Hodgkins, PFU
Administrator, St. Mary's House, The Close, Lichfield, WS13 7LD

The document (and an associated PowerPoint presentation) may be downloaded from

<http://www.intranet.lichfield.anglican.org/pfu/index.htm>

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