

Giving Review

Encouraging Giving in our Church

We believe in a generous God, a God who gave up everything for us and gave us everything we could ever need. God calls us to be generous in response to this generosity and to share it with others. We should not see the money we have (either personally or as a church) as ours, but rather as God's and we are called to receive these gifts and to sensibly manage them.

And yet, so many of us find it difficult to talk about giving and generosity.

This document is a simple way for you as a PCC to talk about how you encourage giving and generosity in your church and wider community. By working through these questions and activities, you should find yourself in a position to be able to encourage a healthy and challenging exploration of giving.

Jesus and Money

We see through the life of Jesus that money, wealth, and possessions should not be a subject we are afraid to explore. In the Bible we find more verses on it than of 'faith' or 'prayer' and it is only the subject of 'love' that we see more frequently.

The way we handle our money and our assets should be wholly integrated into our life as a follower of Jesus and our desire and calling to be Christ-like. Our generosity, in all aspects of life, is a hallmark of a lived-out faith and a testament to it.

We are called to be generous.

Giving Culture

The first area to explore is your culture of giving and generosity. Spend a couple of minutes discussing the following questions, either as a group or in small break-out groups:

1. Why should I give to this church?

There are many reasons why people give to their church. Discuss what makes your church distinctive (location, style of worship, missional activities etc...) and try to encourage one another to share how and why you first started giving to the church.

2. Do we have a budget? Do we pay attention to it?

Budgets help you stay financially secure and enable you to respond to God's call of mission and generosity to your community. They also help build trust in the way you run your finances and this can encourage giving. If you don't have a budget, how might you go about creating one?

3. Culture of generosity...

Using the scales below, where would you place your church.

At risk financially	←————→	Financially secure
Not very generous	←————→	Very generous
Little faith God will provide	←————→	Great faith God will provide
Few givers	←————→	Many givers

Practicalities of Giving

The following questions are designed to help you explore how you encourage giving in your church and community. It may be helpful to send these questions to your PCC in advance of your meeting and get everyone to complete the questions as best they can, comparing the answers during the meeting. Please tick all answers that apply.

1. How do we encourage regular giving to our parish?

- We have giving information leaflets easily accessible in the church
- We have a giving display in a prominent location
- We have giving information on our website
- We have online giving facility setup
- We encourage the use of the Parish Giving Scheme (if available in the Diocese)
- We encourage people to move away from envelopes to other regular giving systems

2. Do we make the most of Gift Aid?

- All who give are encouraged to complete a gift aid form
- We claim gift aid monthly
- We claim gift aid quarterly
- We claim gift aid annually
- We claim all the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) we are entitled to

3. Our church has a giving day/week

- More than once a year
- Annually
- Every few years when required
- Rarely or never

4. On our giving day/week we...

- Explain what we spend money on
- Explain how gifts enable mission and ministry
- Ask everyone to consider an increase to their giving
- Follow up with those who have not responded

5. We formally thank all our regular givers...

- By personalised letter or email
- In general written communications
- During the 'giving service'
- Rarely or never
- We thank in other ways

6. We preach/talk about giving and/or generosity

- Several times a year
- Once a year
- We don't preach/talk about giving, but we use other methods (e.g. small groups)
- We don't preach/talk about giving

7. We preach/talk about our impact and vision for the future

- Several times a year
- Once a year
- We don't preach/talk about impact or vision, but we use other methods (e.g. small groups)
- We don't preach/talk about giving

8. Do we have ways people can give contactlessly

- Yes through a contactless giving device
- Yes through a QR code system
- No
- No, but we recognise this is an area we should explore

9. Do we encourage people to give through a legacy?

- We have mentioned legacies within the preaching and teaching at services
- We celebrate past legacies and new pledges
- We have a legacy policy
- We have information leaflets easily accessible in church
- We have information about legacies on our website

10. Do we encourage fundraising in our local community where appropriate?

- We host special fundraising events
- We give opportunities for people to give at 'life event' services (weddings, baptisms, funerals etc)
- We offer 50/50 plate offerings at 'life events' so that donations are shared with another charity

The questions in this final section relate to financial practice more generally and are focussed on areas that can sometimes get overlooked. Whilst improving in these areas won't directly generate extra giving (although they may generate alternative income streams) they will help you build a more stable financial model, which in turn builds trust that can encourage people give more generously.

11. Do we make the most of our facilities for hire?

- We advertise online
- We advertise with up to date and attractive photos
- We have checked our charges with other venues locally
- We review our charges and ensure any subsidies we offer are still correct

12. Do we manage our maintenance wisely?

- We put money aside each year for maintenance
- We have a budget for work highlighted on the last quinquennial inspection report

13. Do we explore grant funding?

- We have applied for 1 or more grants in the past year
- We have highlighted activities that might be suitable for grant funding
- We have asked the diocese for support and expertise in applying for grants

14. How do we manage our reserves?

- We have a reserves policy which is reviewed by the PCC each year
- Our reserves are at least three months running costs (not including parish share/common fund)
- Our reserves are more than six months running costs but we have a policy to spend the surplus