



newtown:erskineville
ANGLICAN CHURCH

EXCEL IN THE GRACE OF GIVING

GIVING FINANCIALLY

God's grace is so abundant and his love towards us is so rich. This is at the heart of Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 8.

⁹For 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.

It is in the context of God's grace and love towards us, Paul addresses the principle of excelling in the "grace of giving" particularly relationship to our financial giving.

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. ⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

To excel means making a commitment to being biblical, disciplined, thoughtful and intentional in our actions. So we need regularly to spend some time considering how we, can excel in the grace of giving.

WORKING OUT HOW MUCH TO GIVE

In the Old Testament, God's people were commanded to give a tenth ('tithe') of all their produce to God in joyful response to his generous blessings to them. Much of the tithe went towards supporting the priests who served them in God's work, and from them to the poor in the community.

The New Testament doesn't stipulate percentages, but challenges us with the principles of generosity, partnership, obligation and love. So how much should we give?

A tenth is a good starting point (can you imagine the disciples giving less than their previous tithe after they became Christian?), but it should be a starting point for considering how generous we can be, rather than a legalistic figure we must absolutely stick to. The more fundamental question to ponder is: how much have we received from God?

Paul provides some further very practical guidelines for the Christians at Corinth:

- 'On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.' (1Cor 16:2)
- 'Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.' (2 Cor 9:6)
- 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' (2 Cor 9:7)

WORKING OUT HOW MUCH TO GIVE – IN PRACTICE

Many people use the 'tithing' principle as a rough 'rule of thumb', setting aside 10% of their income to support the work of various Gospel and aid organisations, including their local church. So, for example, someone whose total annual income is \$50,000, and has decided to set aside 10%, will end up giving \$5,000 annually (or \$420 per month). However, this should not be thought of as a legalistic requirement, nor put an artificial cap on how much you give. Many of us in Australia have been abundantly blessed, and can afford to give away a higher proportion than 10%.

This process of 'deciding in your heart' how much to give will of course need to be repeated each year or so, or as your financial situation changes. This should include both a review of the percentage you decide to set aside, as well as a recalculation to reflect a change in income.

TO WHOM SHOULD I GIVE?

In the Old Testament, the Israelite tithe was channelled by God to those who needed it – to the priests and Levites who had no other source of income because of their duties, and to the poor of the land.

We see a similar pattern in the New Testament, where Christian giving is directed to meeting the needs of those who labour amongst us in the Lord, as well as towards those who are in need. As Paul puts it:

'Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches... so then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith'. (Gal 6:6-10)

This means you should direct your giving towards your church, the work of the gospel further afield and to those who are in need . Accordingly, you will need to apportion the amount you decide to give between these different areas.

The ministries of Newtown Erskineville Anglican receive support from the giving of those who attend. A large proportion of our giving should go towards supporting this ministry from which we benefit and through which we are reaching out into our local community.

10% of our churches general (undirected) giving is routinely set aside for external missions. **So your regular giving to our church already contributes to supporting Gospel missions around the world.**

Some people also choose to give directly to missionary organisations, especially where the organisations are able to receive money in a 'tax effective' way.

We also encourage you to consider directly supporting Christian organisations that are involved in gospel ministry 'further afield', and to make a contribution to those organisations directly involve in support those in need.

HOW TO GIVE

To allow ministries to be planned and effectively managed, it helps us a great deal if your giving is **regular**. If giving is uneven across a year (and especially if giving is loaded towards the end of the year), Parish Council has to manage a 'cash crisis' at the end of the year. This makes it difficult to plan for future ministries.

The most helpful thing you can do is set up a BPay payment of regular Direct Credit from your bank account to the Parish bank account (details are at the end of the document).

Advantages of Direct Credit and BPay giving include:

- your giving in support of ministry in the Parish is regular and automatic
- your giving doesn't go on holiday when you do
- you don't have to worry about theft of cash from your home, handbag or wallet
- you reduce the risks of theft or loss during handling between the service and the bank
- you reduce the workload for sidespeople, wardens and the others who give their time to count, record and bank the offertories
- you have a printed record (in your bank statement) of your giving so you can easily check to make sure that you have kept up with your planned/budgeted giving to God's work in the Parish

Do you have questions?

Please ask a Warden or Parish Councillor if you have any questions about our Parish finances.