

DIOCESE OF ELY

**RESOURCING
MISSION
ACTION
PLANNING**

7:

***“Stewardship and
Mission Action Planning”***

When engaging with **Mission Action Planning**, parishes will no doubt have to think of the resources available to them, both in terms of personnel and finances. **Mission Action Planning** may well require further resources to become available. It is the experience of many churches that when a clear vision is agreed, resources begin to come together around that vision.

Jesus talks about money a lot – in fact one in three of his parables and one in six of all his sayings relate to money and possessions. St Paul gives us some very useful advice on giving, and this is not to underestimate the passages in the Old Testament on money. Yet giving to the church is often given lowest priority.

God has created everything on this earth for us, and he has also sent his Son for our redemption. Without doubt God has been generous to us, so shouldn't we be generous back to God in return? We are giving back to God (through the church) a part of our income and possessions as first priority, not what is left after all other expenses have been paid. The offertory prayer in the Communion Service says, "of your own do we give you", meaning that God gave us money to look after and that a worthy amount should be given back to him.

In the old days we used to have Stewardship campaigns, perhaps once every five years, because the church treasurer said we needed more money. But there is much more to Stewardship (i.e. Christian Giving) than that. It is so important a part of the living-out of our Christian discipleship that we need to consider our Christian attitude to money much more often than once every five years, probably once a year at minimum. There is a very simple way of doing this, and your Diocesan Stewardship Chairman can describe this to you.

In putting together your **Mission Action Plan** you are doing your part to bring the Kingdom of God nearer in your parish. Every year you will be reviewing this to bring it up-to-date. Your parishioners need similarly to review their giving annually to finance this plan.

A SELECTION OF QUOTATIONS ON STEWARDSHIP

“The earth is the Lord’s, and all that therein is.” (Psalm 24:1)

“Everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.” (1 Chronicles 29:1)

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” (John 3:16)

“The Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins.” (Galatians 1:3)

“They gave themselves first to the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 8:5)

“You know the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ: he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

“If you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have, not on what you haven’t.” (2 Corinthians 8:12)

“Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

“A chequebook is a theological document – it shows who and what you worship.” (Billy Graham)
(perhaps we should apply that equally to the credit card statement)

“Do you know for me what money is? Money is God’s sheepdog snapping at our heels until we turn in the right direction. With Christ as our shepherd, and money as God’s sheepdog, let us no longer resist where he wants to lead us but take heart and take courage.” (Archbishop John Sentamu)

THE PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

(a) We give as a **response to what God has given us**, whether in His creation of everything for us, in Jesus' redemption of us on the cross, and in the Holy Spirit's guidance in our daily lives.

(b) We give in **grace, not through law**. The Old Testament has taught us tithing, the New Testament proportional giving. Tithing should not mean that we give God 10% and keep the remaining 90%, rather like the application of a tax. God is not a tax man. We have to determine what shall be the **token of our all** that we shall give.

(c) Our giving is part of our management of money. If Jesus rules our hearts, he should rule our pocket also.

(d) We are called to give **generously**. For some people 10% does not represent generosity, for others it is truly generous.

(e) We give:

- as a result of **prayer**
- as a **priority** on the calls of our income
- **proportionally** to what we have been given; our income should represent a **worthy** proportion of our available income
- with **regularity**
- with **dependability**
- (ideally) **sacrificially**
- **joyfully**

For further help please contact the Chairman of the Stewardship Support Group:

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