

- We respond to Christ's gospel in worship, mission, and Christian service, with love for our Father. What we give is given with joy and generosity in return for the infinite love He gives us.
- Our Christian discipleship requires that we apply Christian principles to our lives. Stewardship (=Christian Giving) is an important part of discipleship.
- As money is such an important part of our life, Jesus should reign equally as much in our pockets as in our hearts, in our financial planning as well as in the rest of our daily lives. He had a lot to say about money and possessions (one in three of all his parables; one in six of all his sayings).

There are numerous further references to giving in both Old and New Testaments, especially Deuteronomy 14:22 (*be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce*) Matthew 6: 19-24 (*lay not up treasure on earth*) Matthew 19:24 (*easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God*) Mark 12: 41-44 (*the story of the widow's mite*) Luke 6:38 (*give and it shall be given unto you*) Luke 12:13-21 (*the rich fool*) Luke 18:18-29 (*the rich ruler*) Luke 19: 1-10 (*Zacchaeus*) Malachi 3:6-12 (*robbing God*) and 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 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

HOW SHOULD IT BE GIVEN?

- As a result of **prayer**. We are responsible to God for the use of all his gifts (1 Cor 8:6)
- As our first **priority** (Exodus 23:19, 1 Corinthians 16:2), not what is left over.
- As part of our **worship** (Psalm 96:8) and as part of a communal response.
- We should not offer to God what has cost us nothing (2 Samuel 24: 17-25). Our giving should therefore be **sacrificial** of at least part of our wealth and lifestyle.
- **Proportionally** to what we have been given (2 Corinthians 8:1-15, Deuteronomy 16:17). Our giving should represent a **worthy** proportion of our disposable moneys.
- With **regularity** (Galatians 6:6-10), but allowing for spontaneous generosity.
- With **dependability** (1 Thessalonians 4:9- 12)
- **Joyfully** (2 Corinthians 9:7, Acts 20:35)

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE?

"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all"
Isaac Watts

- His love demands our **all**: to represent this we give back to God a token part of all that he has given us (1 Chronicles 29).
- It is for you to decide how much this is, after prayer.

- The Church of England General Synod asks for average 5% of income (a half-tithe). A further 5% may be given to other charities and good causes which further the Kingdom of God. This may be difficult for some and easy for others, but these aspirations constitute a good long term target to work towards. Work out where you stand in relation to this 5% of income, and observe this measure of your generosity. Are you really being generous or are you 'tipping God'?

"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

"So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God"

Luke 12:21

- In working out Giving in relation to income and wealth, using percentages as shown above, do not forget that the %age is a token of your all: it does not mean that one part is God's and the other part is yours.
- The giving of time and talents, (very essential factors in the running of every church) should not however be considered to be an *alternative* to the giving of money
- The amounts are confidential between you and God, although they have to be recorded for tax and gift aid reasons.