

ground force

building a money education ministry
part 6: open house



welcome

The fire will test what sort of work each has done...
(1 Corinthians 3:13b)

A home is more than bricks and mortar. A house becomes a home when there is love and laughter, relationships and hospitality. That is why we have house warming parties! An effective money education ministry will promote generosity as a core value of personal discipleship and seek to build the church as a generous community.



why generosity?

In a consumer crazy society we can gain the world and lose our souls. Money defines much of our identity and aspirations. It shapes our values, our expectations and our relationships. A right relationship with money is characterised not by guilt but grace, not possessing but recognising God's ownership of all we have, not by the acquisition of more but by generosity.

Money meets practical needs and Paul devoted a good chunk of his apostolic ministry to arranging an offering from the gentile churches for the poor church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9). But at its heart generosity is not rooted in the need, however important, but in the giving of God himself.

Stewardship understands generous giving to be the hallmark of authentic discipleship around money and possessions. As fire tests what we have built on the foundation which is Christ, so giving is the truest test of the integrity of our financial discipleship.

➔ For more on this search the Resource Library for The Grace of Giving

make it personal

The starting point has to be our own experience of giving and generosity and our awareness of the issues.

- Review you own giving: when did you last review your giving? Do you give a set amount or is your giving a percentage of your income (net or gross income – its your choice)? Is giving a first commitment or from what is left over at the end of the week/month?
- Read the chapters on giving in the books on the recommended reading page of the website.
- Explore the excellent website www.generousgiving.org
- Discover Stewardship giving accounts, a flexible and tax efficient way to prioritise your giving.



- Articles on giving and stewardship can be found at <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/preach/preaching.htm> and audio files at <http://www.generousgiving.org/conference-media>

the personal budget coaching service

As ever, good budgeting is foundational to good giving. We cannot be generous with what we give if we do not know or are not in control of how much we need to live. As with all money courses it always helps for participants to know that there is a budget coach available to offer prayerful and practical support. See *Ground Force* part 5 for more a little more information on this.

Any giving initiative is an opportunity to gently remind people and to advertise the personal budget coaching service. The challenge to generosity often raised issues for people about affordability and debt issues can be flushed out.

encouraging preaching and teaching on giving

For many churches if they talk about money at all it is in connection with giving. The danger here is that we only preach on money-related matters when we need additional income and this can be counter productive.

Alerting church leaders to available resources is a good start. A money advocate or members of a money ministry team may have the ability and the permission to preach in church or to lead teaching sessions within the church.

Section three of *Money Palette* summarises some of the most accessible and popular resources for preaching and teaching on giving. Among them are:

- Seasons of Giving is a creative four week bible study from Stewardship which explores giving in the context of our use of money.
- ➔ Click the Resources tab on the website to find out more about Seasons of Giving.
- Extensive preaching resources can be found at www.givinginrace.org - background notes, liturgy and sample sermons on fifteen separate bible passages on giving plus three bible studies on giving, looking at 2 Cor 8-9, Luke and the Exodus narrative.
- There is a section on giving in the wide ranging bible study course from Crown Financial Ministries (UK) see www.crownuk.org
- Anglican churches will be especially interested in Giving for Life, a report commended by General Synod in July 2009. See www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife for details.

a stewardship Sunday

Not Stewardship the charity - stewardship as part of discipleship!

Many churches hold a stewardship campaign every three or four years. Some have an annual review every year. This is an excellent opportunity for a money advocate or money ministry team to make a significant contribution.

- What does your church do? Is additional support from you needed? Approach those who are responsible for planning these events.
- Can a giving initiative be enriched by a bookstall, a magazine article, prayer resources, a simple money presentation etc.
- Draw attention to available resources. www.givingingrace.org is one such resource. Giving for Life has a range of useful materials for leadership teams and individuals. A stewardship programme called TRIO, The Responsibility is Ours, is widely used. For a brief summary visit <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/trio>
- Talk to your denominational body or diocese. There is often a dedicated Stewardship officer who can offer advice and hands on support. Many churches encourage the appointment of Parish Giving Officers as giving advocates in their congregations. For more details see <http://parishresources.org.uk/giving.htm>
- This may be an opportunity to make people aware of the Stewardship charitable giving accounts. Literature can be downloaded from www.stewardship.org.uk

training

Stewardship regularly leads training sessions for clergy and lay leaders: in deaneries, formal denominational clergy training, informal clergy groupings and regional meetings.

Consider inviting Stewardship to lead leader and clergy training on *Growing Generous Givers*. Contact education@stewardship.org.uk for details.

other opportunities

Your church almost certainly has at least one day in the year when money is the focus. It may be a special gift day or the presentation of the church budget. There is of course also a stress on finances at the Annual General Meeting.

- Consider how as a money advocate or as a money ministry team you can make a contribution to the planning and/or delivery of these events.
- Is it appropriate to set up a special bookstall or information table, to make some literature available or to promote the personal budget coach service?
- There may be opportunities for personal testimony.