

St Mary Magdalene Mitford St Cuthbert Hebron

Biblical wisdom for financial giving

A pastoral letter from Rev Canon Alyson Lamb, February 2019

Dear friends

The Bible tells us many helpful things about money and giving, including:

- **God has given us everything.** He gave his own Son for our salvation (John 3.16). He supplies us with all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6.17). Everything we have belongs to Him (1 Chronicles 29:14).
- **Christian giving is not commanded** or to be seen as a duty. It is a loving, thankful response to God's abundant giving to us (2 Corinthians 8:8).
- **Giving is good for the giver.** As we give, our good God gives us more so we can give again (Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9: 8-11).

The Bible also gives us **four main principles** for financial giving:

1. **REGULAR** GIVING see *1 Corinthians 16.2*

'On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income'. The New Testament calls for regular giving as an act of worship. It implies advance planning, not giving on impulse. We do not wait until the offering plate is coming down the aisle and think, "Oh no! I haven't given for a while. I'd better drop something in."

2. **GENEROUS** GIVING see *2 Corinthians 9:6, 1 Timothy 6:18, Romans 12:8*

Generosity is difficult to measure because it is an attitude of the heart. Generosity is about how greatly we can contribute, bless, help, encourage and equip others with the resources God had given us.

3. **TITHED** GIVING see *Malachi 3:10, 2 Chronicles 31:5, Nehemiah 10:37*

Tithing is the practice of giving the first 10% of income. As we seek to live and give generously, many Christians see tithing as a good basis for financial giving.

Please turn over

Some of us find the thought of giving 10% potentially uncomfortable. God understands that concern. That is why in one of the key Bible passages on tithing (Malachi 3.10) God says that he does not mind us putting him to the test to see if the blessing we receive back will be as good as he says.

Over the years I have been challenged by these scriptures to give at least a tenth of my income to the church and additional thanksgiving offerings. I have found that God is always wonderfully faithful to his promise.

4. **SACRIFICIAL** GIVING see *Mark 12:41-44, Mark 10:17-21*

Sacrificial giving goes beyond generosity and tithing. It is measured not by the amount we give, but by the amount we keep back. It involves not spending our money as we had perhaps planned and instead giving that money away. There are occasions in our lives when God challenges us to give in this way, especially when money is needed for a special project or circumstance. Over the years, many members of our church have given in this way. We are the beneficiaries of their sacrifices, and we rejoice in their faith and obedience.

YOUR GIVING

As you consider your giving to God through his Church at Mitford and Hebron, may I encourage you to read the scriptures above. Please also read the information on our finances in the leaflet **Journey to Generosity**. Then, please pray, asking God how he is calling you to respond.

- Is God calling you to start giving regularly?
- Or perhaps to increase the level of your giving, especially if you have not done so for some time?
- If you are not yet giving by standing order, could you start now?

How much you give is a matter between you and God only – there is no set rule. But at the very least please give *regularly* and *generously* as part of your Christian discipleship and your commitment to your parish.

With love in Christ,

