

# SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 25 SEPTEMBER 2016



## Why Giving to the Church Is Different from Paying Your Bills

*Erik Raymond*

How do you view giving in the local church?

As I listen to what Christians say, and read what they write, I get the impression that many people think of giving simply as paying another bill. Giving is just like paying the gas account or the council rates. Is this what you think?

Giving is more than this, much more. Rather than simply being mechanical, giving is a spiritual discipline that tangibly expresses our faith in God to provide for us and to use what we give for His work.

Consider what is really going on when we give. I will describe what we do at our church. While some of the ways in which people give may vary, the heart of what we are doing and why we are doing it should be essentially the same.

Each week we gather together for worship on Sunday morning. In the middle of the service we take time to give. This is an act that we do together as a church family in our corporate worship service. It demonstrates that we are a single church body. We are a family that comes together united by the same faith in the same Saviour. We share the same hope, joy, goal in life, and burden for the nations and our neighbours. And we are a family that is working together for the advancement of the gospel.

When we give we are also communicating that we as a church share in this work together. We support the work of the gospel both locally and across the world together. When we give we are saying that we want to see the gospel speed ahead.

We desire to see God use what we give to glorify Himself through the ministry of the Word.

Also, in this giving there is a calculated bit of trust. In order to give money, we are saying that we trust God to provide for our needs. We know that God does not need our money, but He uses it. God is our Father and He cares for us, looking after our families individually and the church collectively. We are also saying that we value the ministry of the Word in such a way that we want to give cheerfully, sacrificially, thankfully, and generously for it.

Giving then, together as a church, should be an expression of our faith in God to provide and to use what we give for the advancement of the gospel.

When we read 2 Corinthians 9 we see there is far more invested in giving than just paying a bill. There is personal examination, contemplation of the need, consideration of what and how God provides, evaluation of what they are giving towards, and an occasion to give thanks to God. Read through a portion of it, but I commend the whole of chapter 9.

*So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." (2 Corinthians 9:5–9)*

Do you think of giving like this? Are you giving joyfully, sacrificially, generously, faithfully, and thankfully? It should be a lot different from writing a cheque to the local electricity supplier.



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