

A notebook on

The Three “R’s”

in

Christian Giving



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Introduction

Reading, **wR**iting, and **aR**ithmetic have traditionally been regarded as the basis of a good education. Similarly our responding in what we say and do with our God-given abilities, time, and possessions forms the basis of our working out our own salvation, *“for God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey his own purpose.”* (Phil 2:13)

God alone bestows on his people the gift of generosity (*“All things come from you, O Lord ... ”*). We cannot accurately be described as generous in sharing what God has given us in the first place; however, He can!

In some cases, giving in and through our churches is sacrificial and consecrated, but that still does not make anyone generous. After all, it is more accurate to apply the quality of *“generosity”* to the gracious Giver of all things.

Accordingly, in our own response to the love of God in Christ and his Church here are **the three “R’s”** to keep together in our hearts and minds, as well as the special prayer below.

Our Giving is Regular.

- **Give as you go, not give as you get.**

“On the first day of the week ... ” Christians put something aside and store it up, in proportion to what has been earned, so that collections need not be made. (1 Cor 16:2)

- **Not a pray now and pay later mentality, nor vice versa.**

Christians are mindful that *“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* (Mt 6:21) They know that this saying of Jesus does not really work the other way around.

- **Costs cannot be met on the “never never”.**

Our Church and its clergy are there 24/7/365. Christians know that *“the labourer deserves his wages”* (Lk 10:7b) and expects the funding of the Church’s mission and ministry to be **reliable** so that proper plans and provisions can be made.

Our Giving is Realistic.

- **It is in line with the times.**

Our weekly church financial support should compare reasonably to the cost of our daily newspaper or other casual spending.

- **Coins and change don't count much.**

For almost all of us, our gift to God should be better than a few coins making a noise on a plate and instead be notes and cheques in order that we can hear the "*still small voice*" of God (1 Kings 19:12b).

- **Count the cost in temporal terms and relate it to eternal values.**

The gift of the "*abundant life*" (John 10:10) in Christ should have some relation to the actual amount we discern God wants us to offer for the life of His Church here on earth.

Our Giving is Readily Offered.

- *“Freely you have received, freely give.”*

Those who sow little shall reap little; and those who sow plenteously shall reap plenteously. **Let every one do according as they are disposed in their heart**, not grudgingly, or of necessity; *“for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (2 Cor 9:7b)

- Not won't power but will power.

*“Be merciful after your ability. If you have much, give plenteously; if you have little, **do your best gladly to give** of that little, for in so doing you gather for yourself a good reward.”* (Book of Tobit 4:8&9 [from the Apocrapha])

- Be neither ashamed, embarrassed, nor proud of what you give.

*“Each one should give, then, as he has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God ... is able to give you more than you need, so that **you will always have all you need** for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause.”* (2 Cor 9:7&8)

Conclusion

All three “*R’s*” go together.

- **Realistic** giving offered on an irregular basis is not sensible to meet the constant and daily demands on the Church’s resources.
- **Regular** giving that is unrealistic honours neither God nor the Church for which His Son gave his life and also demeans the giver.
- Giving that is **Readily** made but that is irregular and unrealistic represents a mere moment of excitement rather than a life long commitment.

So ...

- Are you going to be as true as you possibly can to Christ and His Church, discovering what God wants you to do in response to his generosity?
- Will your Christian Giving be a sacramental sign of the outward and visible offering that reflects your inward and spiritual life?
- Will you allow God’s grace of generosity to shine through you so that people “*will see the good things you do and give praise to your Father in heaven?*” (Mt 5:16b)

When you review and revise your financial support for God’s work in and through your local church, ensure that the **three “*R’s*” – realistic giving, regular giving, offered readily** – are reflected in your Christian Giving.

Revise The Three “R’s” of your Christian Giving

1. How realistic is your financial support for God’s work in and through your church?

Now

Future

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10% of pay or earnings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5% of pay or earnings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About the 3% average of the pay or earnings of Church of England members | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About the price of a pack of twenty cigarettes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whatever change is to hand | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. In what ways do you regularly offer financial support for God’s work in and through your church?

Now

Future

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standing Order | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Aid | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Days, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. How readily do you make your offering?

Now

Future

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> eagerly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with pleasure and in gratitude | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> willingly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> as a moral obligation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rather reluctantly | <input type="checkbox"/> |

O Lord, our God, the giver of all good gifts around us, we thank you for making us who we are and giving us what we have. Keep us, we pray, as we respond to your gracious generosity in our lives, ever mindful that our giving needs to be **realistic, regular, and readily offered** for the spread of your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour.

Amen.