

Christian giving: sacrificial

discussion guide

based on **2 Corinthians 8.1-9** (Linked to sermon of 27/4/25)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/online-services

This is part of a short series on Christian giving.

Intro: What are you particularly grateful to God for at the moment?

Read 2 Cor 8.1-9

Paul is talking about a collection that he was encouraging the Gentile Christians to take up for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem – who were facing a famine.

Verses 2-3 don't make human sense! Spend some time unpacking those verses.

Lena talked about a time when she and David didn't feel able to give financially, yet eventually did so (giving 'beyond their ability') and found things got better financially, not worse. Can you think of similar stories from your own, or others' lives?

What words come to mind when you think of Christian giving? Why?

Why do you think the Macedonians thought of the word 'privilege' (v4)?

Why is it important to think of Christian giving as first and foremost 'to the Lord' (v5)?
What could help you do that?

Lena pointed out that Paul uses the word 'grace' in v 1, 6, 7 and 9, reflecting the generosity of God's gifts to them. She said that the more we focus on what we are grateful to God for, the more generous we will be to others. How have you seen that to be true?

Lena encouraged us to be joyful givers (8.2; 9.7). What joy have you found in giving?
What would encourage you to give joyfully?

This series on Christian giving is coinciding with the start of Restore & Renew – although obviously it relates to much more than that!

We'd encourage you to watch the launch video as a group together (www.stjamesbythepark.org/rr) – it's about 10 minutes long. There will be opportunities after the services in the coming weeks to ask questions, and Dan will try to visit all the small groups as well.

We'd also encourage you to read and reflect on this testimony from a member of our congregation:

What does tithing mean for me?

I know that everything I have is a gift from my Father in heaven so I am thankful for everything He has given me.

There has been subsidence in my house so my insurance premium is now very high and naturally this worried me, although why I don't know, because my Father has always watched over me and cared for me lovingly. My Lord covered this premium with an unexpected cheque for the same amount and then extravagantly topped it with an almost identical amount when an insurance inspector found anomalies in past

charges by the insurance company.

In the face of what and how my Father has looked after me lovingly and financially too, why would I not return to Him a fraction of what I receive.

It is an honour and a privilege to give and as my state pension is going up I need to review my giving. I sometimes split my tithe between church and a favourite charity as and when it seems right to do so.

If you are struggling financially do talk to God about it. Of course He already knows but in a relationship you talk and He wants that one to one with you.

If you have a generous heart and give lovingly you will never outdo God in His generosity to you.

Sharing testimonies about giving (and how God has provided for us), as this person has done, and as Lena did on Sunday, is good for us. In effect, Paul was sharing the testimony of the Macedonian churches, too. How does hearing such testimonies make you feel?

If you have a testimony that you'd be happy to share (either anonymously, or with your name), please send it to Dan.

What is one thing you need to think about more as a result of this discussion?

What is one thing you're going to do as a result of this discussion?

Spend some time thanking God for his generosity to us; praying that God would stir our hearts to give generously of our time, talents and treasures; praying for Restore & Renew (you could say the prayer below together).

Gracious Father,

We look to you in faith for Restore and Renew.

Keep our eyes fixed on Christ the cornerstone, not on the buildings themselves.

Help those on our buildings teams to lead this project faithfully.

*Please provide all we need – skills, gifts, time and money –
to renovate our buildings for all.*

Everything we have has come from you;

Open our hearts to give back to you what is yours already.

Let us prove once again that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

And when the building work is finished,

*we pray that our buildings will provide great places for us and many others
to go deeper with you,*

grow closer to each other

and reach further with the love of Jesus.

Amen.