

LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

Journeying Up
Giving- responding to  God



“Tree”. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Participants’ Notes.

Leading the Way is a resource produced by the Diocese of Truro Discipleship Team. It is designed to help individuals, congregations and communities to explore the way of life which will enable them to flourish in Jesus Christ.



CONTENTS

- * Beginning where we are
- * Icebreaker
- * Introduction
- * Bible ‘conversation’
- * Questions
 - ◇ personal
 - ◇ congregational
 - ◇ community/communal
- * Prayer
- * Other resources

* Prayer

All that has been done in this session will be drawn together in prayer. This prayer can be found on the front of Giving - a Simple Guide.

Generous God you give us so much.

Every breath is a gift, every sight, sound, taste and touch; every friend and loved one.

Teach us now to respond to such abundance with love and imagination and to share your generosity with a needy world through a servant Church.

May our living faith make a difference in the lives of others through the extravagant love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

* Other Resources

See the back of the ‘Giving - a Simple Guide’ leaflet.

Also watch our own Truro Diocese video on the subject of Generosity here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHjA2asr6rY>

Are there ways in which our church buildings can be used more generously within our community?

⇒ Are there areas of our wider community in which people seem to be mean-spirited? How might we take action, show/express our concern?

What are the signs of generosity that we see in our local community? Can we list them?

⇒ How could we support and encourage those involved?

EXTRA SPACE FOR NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

* Beginning where we are

Your group leader will light a candle and place it on a table and then lead a prayer, or perhaps use a video to introduce the theme.

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
Ignite in us your holy fire;
Strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
Revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

* Icebreaker

The leader will introduce an opportunity to reflect, which will be brought to a close with the following Thanksgiving.

Blessed are you, Holy God,
creator, redeemer and life-giver;
you have spoken the world into being
and filled it with wonder and beauty.

For every blessing we have received
we give you thanks and praise.
Blessed are you, Holy God,
for people of every language and culture
and for the rich variety you give to life.
For every blessing we have received
we give you thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Holy God,
for Jesus Christ our Saviour,
truly divine and truly human,
living and dying for us,
and going before us into heaven.

For every blessing we have received
we give you thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Holy God,
for your Spirit,
the fire of love burning in our hearts,
bringing us to faith,
and calling us to holiness
in the Church and in the world.

For every blessing we have received
we give you thanks and praise.

(New Patterns for Worship G61)

* Introduction

The leader will read a short précis from 'Giving- a Simple Guide' - please take the leaflet home and read it further.

* Bible 'conversation'

Prayer

Holy Spirit of God;
open our ears and our minds, our hearts and our spirits,
**that we may hear you speaking to us
through these words of Scripture.**

⇒ How might we grow trust within the congregation so that needs can be expressed? And how could we respond to those needs?

⇒ Do we give a proportion of our income away? Do we give to food-banks, through shoeboxes, or other examples?

Do we offer the use of our facilities to local organisations?

⇒ How could we be more generous within our wider community?

⇒ What might it mean for us to have a generous attitude to other parishes in our cluster/deanery?

What might we be able to offer to other congregations who struggle more than we do?

• Community

What are the needs within our local community? Can we list them?

⇒ In what ways could we offer help ourselves? Are there other Parishes or Deaneries with expertise, who could help us respond? What outside organisations might be able to help?

- ⇒ Do I consider my giving to other charities in the same way?
- ⇒ Does my Will (if I have one - if not, why not?) ensure that I continue to be generous beyond this earthly life?

Have I become conscious through this session of being ungenerous, even stingy, in any areas of my life?

- ⇒ What might I need to do about this?

• **Congregational**

Are we aware of ways in which people from our congregation are generous in their lives outside church? (This might mean volunteering their time or talents, offering friendship and help, supporting charities financially or practically.....).

- ⇒ Do we pray for them in their activities?
- ⇒ Do we celebrate all that people do in our community? (Could we have articles in the magazine, or a display in church illustrating the range of ways in which people give?)

What are the ways in which we as a church/PCC express generosity to our own congregation and to the wider community?

- ⇒ Are we aware of the needs of those who worship alongside us?

May we be ready to be encouraged and challenged, guided and changed.

For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

2 Corinthians 8.1-4, 9 and 9.6-15

8 We want you to know, brothers and sisters,* about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ²for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege* of sharing in this ministry to the saints.....

⁹For you know the generous act* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.....

9: 6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every

good work. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Notes

* Questions

• Personal

In what sense do I feel rich through God's blessings in my life?

⇒ What are the ways in which I seek to be generous in my life?

'Generosity is something most of us have to learn. It is a discipline that (for Christians) forms part of our discipleship.'

⇒ Who helped me to learn about being generous?

⇒ How do I incorporate the discipline of generosity into my personal life and walk with Christ?

⇒ How prayerful am I about how I should respond to God's generosity?

Paul, in the passage, seems to be saying that giving/ generosity is a spiritual response to the generosity of God.

⇒ Does my current giving of my time, my gifts, my possessions, my money, reflect my level of gratitude to God, and all that He means in my life?

⇒ Do I consider my regular giving of money in Church to be a spiritual matter, to be about my response to God?