

When I was asked at Stewardship Committee that it would be good practice for its members to write about why they 'Tithe' to the Church my feelings were of apprehension. I know the reason myself why I choose to give a percentage of my Income for the work of God but how to write it down in the written form for all to see, well, that was a challenge. However with doing this, it has allowed me to focus & to really think about the reasons why I tithe and the amount that I give. As a child, I used to love placing a coin/s on the Church Offertory Plate, only when my coins were shiny & new did I experience a reluctant feeling about parting with the money. Of course, my Sunday Collection was the money which my parents had given to me for that purpose, I didn't really understand why I gave it apart from paying towards the upkeep of the Church. As time went on I still gave my donation, now in envelopes provided, but only during the Services I attended, rarely did I donate treble the amount for the three Sunday Services I may have missed! I was now 'Giving' out of my own money but there were my bills; mortgage, children, material possessions to buy & social events to pay out for, from my Income also! Naturally I still continued to 'Give', but I wasn't very generous, 'Giving' was well below in my list of priorities & budgeting. At this point, I ask myself, did I really understand the meaning of 'Stewardship', did I give to maintain our Church & Vicar, Diocese, to help people less fortunate than myself, for the glory of God's work to continue, or just to donate a small % without much thought? No, I didn't really comprehend when I younger, the significance, but now thankfully, my growing Faith has guided me to a deeper understanding of God's generosity & now I realise that 'Giving' is rooted in our Discipleship & our response to it as Christians, allowing 'Growth, Mission & Vision' in our Church, Community & Diocese. We are Trustees/Custodians of our Gifts, Time & Talents and we should appreciate & treasure the World which God has created for us, its culture & values. Stewardship, is not only about 'Giving' or 'Money', it is everything we think, say or do after we say 'I Believe'. Please reflect on what Stewardship means to you as a member of God's family. All that we have, has been given to us freely by God & as a member of God's family we must rejoice. & use our Faith, generosity, skills & talents, as part of our Discipleship. As a result of my irregular 'giving' in the past, I now donate via Bank Direct Debit which I strongly advise, it is so easy. It gives me a good framework to Regular Giving & reviewing the amount I give. Now, having been a Committee member I realise the importance of Planned Giving in forecasting Yearly Regular Income for Parish Share & our Church Budget Purposes. These days this is an essential 'tool' for Churches who have to try to meet the huge challenges of paying increasing Parish Shares, setting Church Budgets, paying ever rising costs & maintaining our wonderful Churches & Buildings for generations to come.

Emily Crowson - Stewardship Committee

# STEWARDSHIP

**PLEASE HELP US RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF  
BUILDING OUR CHURCH'S FUTURE SO THAT WE  
CAN THRIVE & REACH OUT**

THE WAY WE USE OUR TIME, TALENT AND  
MONEY IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF OUR  
CHRISTIAN LIVING, OUR CHRISTIAN  
DISCIPLESHP. OUR 'GIVING' MAKES,  
MINISTRY AND MISSION POSSIBLE.  
WITHOUT IT WE CANNOT BE A 'LIVING'  
CHURCH AND SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.

## Giving With Grace

**Stewardship Committee Members have prayed & reflected on  
Their 'Christian Giving' & 'Why they Tithe'. This has helped us to  
pray & to focus on our Christian Values & our priorities as  
Christ's Disciples, embodying Prayer, Sacrament, Scriptures &  
Worship.**

***The Stewardship Committee would love you to write down your  
thoughts & reasons. By writing our reflections down, it helps us  
all to focus on why we should give willingly & generously to God  
in our time, talents & financial 'Christian Giving'. It also reminds  
us to say 'Thank You' to God for all that he gives us.***

**THANK YOU TOO FOR THE SUPPORT WHICH YOU GIVE ALREADY  
TO OUR CHURCH IN SO MANY WAYS.**

A simple answer to the question “Why do you tithe?” is “I tithe because I was taught to do so” – but this teaching happened to me when I was about 30 years old, so let me explain.

I was brought up in a household where questions of faith were rarely discussed. My father’s Sunday ‘rest’ was dinghy sailing at a local Sailing Club, and his hobby required the whole family around him to crew for him. So I rarely went to Church as a child, and came to know about faith and the Bible through school. When I left home and entered the world of work, I drifted away from the faith I had, and the idea of going to a Bible Study class, or giving a proportion of my income to the Church, wasn’t anywhere on my agenda.

Alison and I got married when I was 28. Alison titheed her income, but I found the idea quite frightening – how could one give away some of ones income before paying for everything else? Before we got married I always seemed to almost run out of money before the end of each month, so how would I manage if I took what sounded like a 10% pay cut? After our first year of marriage, the vicar at the Church Alison belonged to in Gateshead, whose name was Bob, asked Alison if she would invite me to the Alpha Course which they were starting. I think I managed to surprise Alison by accepting! On that Alpha Course I became a Christian, and began joyfully attending the Church which up to then I had only occasionally been to.

So it was that I heard Bob, our vicar, teaching about Giving. I decided to take the plunge and join Alison in tithing. Not only did we not starve, but we always seemed to have enough (sometimes just enough!) for what we needed. God wants us to have enough, but He also wants us to honour Him by giving back the first portion of what we receive. My tithing is a response to God’s love for me, but it is also honouring to Him and to those who went before me and set me the example to follow.

**Rob Taylor - Chair of Stewardship Committee**

**Why should I tithe?** Tithing is a way of teaching us that God must be our first priority. Deuteronomy 14:22-23. “You must tithe all of your crops every year. Bring this tithe to eat before the Lord your God at the place he shall choose as his sanctuary; this applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn of your flocks and herds. The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.”

**David Dickinson - Stewardship Committee**

As a Church, we are constantly trying to balance the books! We don’t just have a large Parish share to pay (£70,000 this year!) we also have an old building that needs repairing as well as general housekeeping expenses. The Lord asks that we ‘put our money where our mouths are.’ To give back 10% of what we have to try and reach that balance.

And yet, God is a loving God. He has not asked us for everything we have. He knows we have to feed our own children and put a roof over our heads. He even knows we have to pay the Inland Revenue! He said, “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s.” The IRS is today’s equivalent of Caesar! God hasn’t ignored the realities of living in today’s world. He doesn’t ask for all of it, or even most of it. Not even one quarter of it! Just one tenth. But it still sounds like a lot, doesn’t it? So how do we give up one tenth of what we earn and not ruin ourselves financially?

Well, we turn over so much to God – our cares, our concerns, our personal problems and our health issues. We say, “Dear Lord, heal my friend.” But God is not a doctor. We say, “Jesus, help my spouse and I to get our marriage back on track.” But God isn’t a marriage councillor. But how many of us have said, “God, guide me in my financial decisions. Help me live and work in order to return to you as much as I can for your work here on earth?”

We pray for health, we pray for guidance, we pray for comfort. Why not turn our financial concerns – and our money – over to God? Why not give back a mere slice of what God gives us back to Him? And it is all His, isn’t it?

Part of the problem is giving up control. When we tithe, we don’t know how the money will be used, so we hesitate to hand over our money. But when there is a fundraiser for something specific – a new boiler or roof repairs at church, or for a particular charity – we always find a way to give. Why wait?

If each and every one of us titheed freely to God, no fundraisers would be needed! There would be plenty to go around! We don’t realize how truly God has blessed us financially. We say, “Lord, it is hard to tithe.” But it shouldn’t be, particularly when we have been blessed by God. Because with our success comes the responsibility to use it wisely to help others and further God’s kingdom.

Tithing ensures that our needs will be met and gives back to God what was always His. When we acknowledge that God is the true owner and giver of all that we have, we will be rewarded in countless ways.

**Deirdre Wellham - Churchwarden**