

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 'Simple Guide to Giving' leaflet.

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

**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.

# LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

Journeying Up  
Giving- responding to  God



“Tree”. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Leaders' Guide.



## CONTENTS

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

These resources undergird and expand the principles identified within the ‘Way of Life’ framework for discipleship. Whilst the ‘Way of Life’ booklet was intended for individual use and development, we have come to recognise the need for churches to consider the same framework for themselves as a body. Equally, we have come to recognise the need for individuals and churches to look beyond themselves, and see how this framework for discipleship might lead to the flourishing of their local community.

This material might be used by a house-group, a working-party, a PCC, or even a whole congregation. The need to consider this particular area might have arisen through Accompanied Ministry Development, through a perceived need within the congregation, or through a concern of the PCC/Ministry Team. There is probably more material here than can be used in one session, so tailor it to your context, or let it spill over into another time.

- ⇒ 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?
- ⇒ Are there ways in which our church building 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?

### \* Prayer

To draw together all that you have done in this session, pray together the prayer on the front of Giving -a Simple Guide. It could be done responsively like this:

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?

⇒ 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?

#### \* Beginning where we are

Light a candle and place it on a table in the room.

Or you might choose to use a video such as The Gift of Generosity [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E\\_QMsNFWQR4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_QMsNFWQR4)

Other videos can be found on the Stewardship web pages. <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/be-inspired/stories>

*This prayer can be used:*

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.  
**Amen**

#### \* Icebreaker

What are the things you most want to thank God for?  
Encourage people to think about this for a moment.  
Give each person a post it note and ask them to write their thoughts on it.

Encourage people to talk together in 2s or 3s about what they have written and why.

Arrange for people to be able to take and stick the post-its somewhere significant, possibly whilst some music is playing. Spend a little time in quiet reflection.  
[This could be a flipchart with 'THANK YOU, GOD' across the top, around a picture, an icon or a cross, or around the candle on the table].

Draw this time to a close by using the thanksgiving below.

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,

## • 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?
- ⇒ 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?

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?
- ⇒ 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?

that we may hear you speaking to us  
through these words of Scripture.  
May we be ready to be encouraged and challenged,  
guided and changed.  
For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

### \* Questions

In the light of this Bible passage, and what it has been saying to people, consider one or more of these groups of questions (also in participants' booklet).

It would be possible to split the participants into 3 groups, to consider one category of questions each, and to report back to the rest.

Alternatively, you may wish to allow people to consider the personal questions themselves later, alone or with a spiritual guide.

If the people of the church are struggling to know what they are about, perhaps it would be best to focus on the congregational questions.

Or if you feel your congregation needs to learn to look beyond themselves, perhaps the community questions will be most appropriate.

These resources are here to be used by you in whatever way feels most appropriate for your particular context.

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

Our reasons to be thankful to God (from the ice-breaker above) remind us of God's super-abundant generosity - we see this in creation, in our relationships, and supremely in God's gift of Jesus for us. Many of Jesus' miracles also reveal profusion and big-heartedness (can people think of examples? - feeding crowds, water into wine..).

Living generously is part of the outworking of our faith in such a generous God. It is part of our 'journeying up' with God, part of our saying 'thank you' to Him, part of our seeking to become more Christ-like.

Living generously isn't just about money - it is also about the way in which we give of our time, our talents, our possessions as well as our money.

This emphasis is thoroughly biblical - there are over 2,300 verses in the Bible about money and possessions. More than a third of Jesus' parables were about our relationship to wealth. The emphasis of his teaching wasn't so much about how much we should give and to whom, but about where our security and our priorities are.

Give each participant a copy of 'Giving- a Simple Guide' if they don't already have one, and encourage reading (again). If you feel that more teaching is needed in this area, you could go through the simple guide leaflet in more detail - but don't just read directly from it!

### \* Bible 'conversation'

We are going to spend some time now listening to God through a passage from the Bible.

Text: 2 Cor.8.1-4,9 and 9.6-15.

Participants will find the full text in their booklet

**Brief intro to the text:** Giving to those in need and to share in the cost of ministry has been a practice in the Church from its very earliest years. In the second letter of Paul to the church in Corinth, he seeks to encourage the church to continue with the collection they had started some time before, which was to aid the believers in Jerusalem who were suffering great hardship. Paul appeals to the example of the church in Macedonia, and encourages the Corinthians to consider the great generosity of God when they consider the needs of others.

Explain to the group the full process for this Bible conversation before you begin. Ensure people know that they will not be made to say anything if they don't want to. The process is this:

Have someone read the passage aloud, followed by a time of silence (at least long enough for people to read it again for themselves).

People are encouraged to note a word or phrase that particularly strikes them, and to stay with that word/phrase, being open to what God might be saying to them through it.

Give everyone an opportunity (by going around the group) to say what their word/phrase is (and no more). People can 'pass' if they wish.

Have a different person read the passage again, followed by a time of silence, in which people can consider further the meaning of their word/phrase.

Going around the group, invite people to say something briefly about what it was in the word/phrase which struck them. Again people can 'pass' if they wish.

Have the passage read for a final time, followed by silence, during which people are invited to make a personal (silent/ written) response to God if they wish.

Now that you have explained the process, use an opening prayer and go through each step.

Holy Spirit of God;  
open our ears and our minds,  
our hearts and our spirits,