**3 Small Steps - Me First!**

Hosting a summer BBQ for friends we were aware of the youngest child jostling for position for his sausages, drinks and dessert. “Me first!” he cried. It can be easy to put our hands up or manoeuvre into prime position to receive something but what about when it comes to giving? Are we still as keen to be first in line? These **3 small steps** will help focus our minds and hearts.

**Step 1: Lead by example.** On a recent visit to a local historic house, I read in the archives that building work for the intended place of worship had proceeded ahead of time because the clergyman had been saving his stipend and gave it generously to the cause. Now, before you all wave this news in front of your incumbent, the Bible challenges each one of us to be an example to others, “…in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity…” (1 Timothy 4:12) and to be givers in every area ourselves. Before we ask our neighbours, family, friends and community for their support, we have a call to reflect the nature of the God we affirm by giving obediently ourselves. Why not ask your treasurer about the Parish Giving Scheme or your churchwarden about ways in which you can serve? They will be thrilled to hear from you.

**Step 2: Give more than the minimum.** Have you ever allocated a portion or all of your income to God? I have read and been inspired by several accounts of Christians, who started out by giving God a tithe (10%) in faith and ended up by giving away 90% of their income, as they prospered and their desire to give more away each year, increased. Ninety per cent may seem like an extreme offering but the challenge is where are you willing to start?

The aforementioned archives didn’t reveal whether the clergyman had saved for this particular building project or whether he had simply reserved God’s money to bless God and others when prompted by the Holy Spirit. It simply revealed a willingness to generously release everything he had received.

**Step 3: Consider the future.** I remember a lively Christian song from years ago, which included the line, “I want to give my life for something that will last forever”. Jesus’ command to “seek first the Kingdom of God”, should be one we take particular note of, being of eternal value in a finite world.

The Cornish clergyman gave: not only in spiritual terms to his flock but in practical financial terms to a future he would never see, enabling future generations to meet to worship together for a hundred years after his own death – and even today. Jesus gave His very life so that we could enter eternity. What will you give, which could endure through the next generations?