

CoreGroup Guide | Much Given, Much Expected – Part 1

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Welcome

From everyone who has been given much, even more will be expected. It can be easy to look at someone else's life and see all the blessings they could be using to make a difference. But, what if we are the ones God is trusting to make an impact through the gifts we have been given? It is a challenge to recognize abundance in our lives, to see ourselves as stewards, and to invest in a vision for bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, but hopefully it is one that we can embrace together. God has big plans for our community, and this series is all about figuring out how we can be a part of them.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us together. As we consider the gifts you have given us, we thank you for the gift of this group. Make this a place where we can speak freely, reflect honestly, and encourage each other in our pursuit of your plan for our lives. Amen.

Ice Breaker

If you were presented with a treasure box just for you, full of something you love, what would be inside?

The Head

The central verse for this sermon series comes from a parable found in Luke 12. This parable is pretty hard to read and not one we often quote. However, the verse below provides the foundation for this series and is worth sitting with for a little bit.

- Read Luke 12:48 together as a group (more than once, if needed!). Let the weight of the words and the spirit of the verse be the lens through which you move through the rest of the conversation today.

Luke 12:48

Much will be demanded from everyone who has been given much, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.

- Being “entrusted with much” is a tricky thing to measure. What comes to mind when you hear this phrase?

One of Jesus' favorite topics to teach his followers about was money and material possessions. While it could be easy to assume that Jesus was anti-money, he actually emphasized the value of smart investments. His expectation was that his followers would use the things he trusted them with to do good. Jesus told his followers this story to demonstrate what this could look like.

Matthew 24:14-30

14 *"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who was leaving on a trip. He called his servants and handed his possessions over to them. 15 To one he gave five valuable coins, and to another he gave two, and to another he gave one. He gave to each servant according to that servant's ability. Then he left on his journey.*

16 *"After the man left, the servant who had five valuable coins took them and went to work doing business with them. He gained five more. 17 In the same way, the one who had two valuable coins gained two more. 18 But the servant who had received the one valuable coin dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.*

19 *"Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The one who had received five valuable coins came forward with five additional coins. He said, 'Master, you gave me five valuable coins. Look, I've gained five more.'*

21 *"His master replied, 'Excellent! You are a good and faithful servant! You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.'*

22 *"The second servant also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two valuable coins. Look, I've gained two more.'*

23 *"His master replied, 'Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much. Come, celebrate with me.'*

24 *"Now the one who had received one valuable coin came and said, 'Master, I knew that you are a hard man. You harvest grain where you haven't sown. You gather crops where you haven't spread seed. 25 So I was afraid. And I hid my valuable coin in the ground. Here, you have what's yours.'*

26 *"His master replied, 'You evil and lazy servant! You knew that I harvest grain where I haven't sown and that I gather crops where I haven't spread seed? 27 In that case, you should have turned my money over to the bankers so that when I returned, you could give me what belonged to me with interest. 28 Therefore, take from him the valuable coin and give it to the one who has ten coins. 29 Those who have much will receive more, and they will have more than they need. But as for those who don't have much, even the little bit they have will be taken away from them. 30 Now take the worthless servant and throw him out into the farthest darkness.'*

- What details in this parable tell us about the type of relationship that existed between the master and servants?
- Why do you think the master gave different amounts to the servants?
- What do you notice about the master's reactions to each of the three servants?

The Heart

When we begin to talk about money, we quickly get to issues of the heart. The choices we make in this area are deeply personal, but we can learn a lot from each other when we open ourselves up to sharing and listening. Whether you feel the weight of too much, or the worry of not having enough, God is calling all of us to be stewards of what God has given us.

- Do you feel like you currently use your resources to make an impact? How so?
- Do you ever feel tempted to bury the things God has given you out of fear, insecurity, or doubt? Describe a time when this has happened.
- What do you think it would feel like to hear God say to you, “Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You’ve been faithful over a little. I’ll put you in charge of much”?

The Hands

In this first week, our focus is on a mindset shift. How can we notice and name the opportunities we already have? We don’t have to be ready to double the gifts God has given us today, but recognizing those gifts - past, present, and future - is a step in the right direction.

- How do you go about noticing gifts from God as they are presented to you?
- What steps do you need to take to dig up any treasures you have buried in order to put them to work on behalf of the Kingdom of God?
- What are some gifts, opportunities, or resources God has given you personally? What about us as a church community?

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for the gifts, treasures, and resources you have generously shared with us. Help us to identify the unique ways you have trusted us as stewards. Give us the courage not to bury what You’ve entrusted to us out of fear, but instead to use it boldly for Your kingdom. Amen.

Going Deeper

Much Given, Much Expected Companion Guide, week 1, pp. 24-25.

From Pastor Charity

At The Gathering, we commit to six spiritual practices to help us pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus. Here is a brief [overview of the six practices](#).

For a deeper look for how to engage with the six practices, check out the [Our Shared Practices](#) page on The Gathering’s website.