

Giving as a Way to Reflect our Generous God

We serve a gracious and generous God. God is a lavish giver. He gives us life and breath. He gave us Jesus. He gives us every spiritual blessing in Christ. He gives us His Holy Spirit to lead, guide us, and empower us. He gives us a hope for the future. We are created in the image of God so we have the privilege and responsibility to reflect God in His generosity. One way we do this is through giving. In the Old Testament we see that the Israelites were commanded to give their tithe (a tenth of their income) as well as various offerings. They were really obligated to give in this way, as the tithe was a type of tax that helped them understand that God is the owner of everything, they needed to be depend on Him, and they should reflect God's generosity. The New Testament is strangely silent on the issue of tithing. As a result, some people argue that the tithe still applies and remains the "goal post" for mature giving, while others argue that the tithe doesn't apply today, as a way to justify giving less than a ten percent. Does the New Testament establish giving principles and where would we expect to see greater generosity - under the Law or under Grace with the Holy Spirit? The answer is that the NT clearly outlines a pattern for giving, under grace, which far surpasses the generosity seen in the OT. **So what are these principles for giving today?**

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, and in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 the Apostle Paul gives us some very helpful guidelines for New Testament giving which apply to us today.

- **Give Thankfully in response to God's grace.** *"You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."* (2 Cor. 8:9) This is our starting point for giving. We recognize that everything we have is a gift of grace flowing from Jesus who gave us everything.
- **Give Humbly under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.** *"They [Macedonian believers] even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do."* (2 Cor. 8:5) Our first action should be to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. When we do this all other areas come under his loving leadership, including how we handle our finances.
- **Give Sacrificially following the example of Jesus.** *"For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more."* (2 Cor. 8:3) God honours sacrificial giving. If our giving is not a true sacrifice we need to give in greater ways.
- **Give Willingly with a cheerful heart.** *"And they did it [gave] of their own free will."* (2 Cor. 8:3) God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7) so we should give willingly, not under compulsion or guilt.
- **Give Excellently as a way to grow in this gift.** *"Since you excel in so many ways...I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving."* (2 Cor. 8:7) Giving is a gift that we should continue to grow in, so it is important to continue to develop our "generosity muscles". One way to grow in this gift, would be to increase your giving by a percentage every year as an act of faith.
- **Give Individually.** *"each one of you should [give]"* (1 Cor. 16:2) We can and should give regardless of our age and stage in life.
- **Give Regularly in accordance with the way you receive your income.** *"On the first day of each week..."* (1 Cor. 16:2) The key is to give with a frequency that is consistent with your income schedule. This is made easy through pre-authorized giving.
- **Give Systematically.** *"put aside a portion of money..."* (1 Cor. 16:2) Giving as a first priority ensures that we honour God in this area. Generally if we wait to give until we pay all our bills we never get around to giving. When we put God first, by giving first, it is amazing to see how He stretches our money.
- **Give Proportionately.** *"a portion...you earned"* (1 Cor. 16:2) Setting a prayerfully, predetermined, percentage to give, helps us be consistent in our generosity. Those with a greater income can give more than those with a modest income. The Bible does not emphasize equal giving but it does emphasize sacrificially giving for all.
- **Give Effectively to Gospel workers in the church, to the needs in the church, other Kingdom work, and the poor & needy.** (Acts 6:1, 11:28-30, Romans 15:25-27, 1 Cor. 8 & 9, Galatians 2:10, 6:6, 1 Timothy 5:17-18.) We make giving to our local church family a priority, and in addition we support other important ministries and causes God places on our heart.
- **Give Expectantly in faith, trusting God to bless & provide.** *"For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."* ⁸ *And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.* ⁹ *As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."* ¹⁰ *For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.* 2 Cor. 9:7-10

What is your Next Step in Generosity?

- If you have never given financially to the church, consider making a **first-time gift** of any amount.
- If you are regular Sunday giver, consider setting up **automated giving** (EFT or E-transfer) which lets you give when you aren't able to attend our Sunday gathering.
- If you are regular giver who is fearful about increasing your level of giving, consider a **90-day generosity challenge**, where you commit to give a more sacrificial percentage of your income for 3 months (preferably via some automated system).
- If your debts or financial situation are keeping you from the generous life you are being called to, contact us for **support and resources**.
- As you step out in faith, be prepared to see God at work in your life in new and powerful ways.

Ways to Give to Sequoia:

1. Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)

- The easiest and most efficient way to give, EFT automates giving to Sequoia on a schedule you determine directly from your bank. You can make adjustments to frequency and amounts easily by sending an email to Donna Boisvert.
- EFT incurs no bank fees and requires minimal administration. EFT is best for regular, predictable giving.
- **How to use EFT: Send an email to Donna Boisvert (admin@sequoiachurch.org) OR fill in the on-line form on the sequoiachurch.org/donate website**

2. E-Transfer

- E-Transfer allows money to be transferred directly from your bank account to Sequoia whenever you choose.
- There is a small bank fee incurred by the sender and e-transfers require minimal administration.
- E-Transfer works well with less predictable giving or for those with an irregular pay schedule.
- **How to use E-Transfer: Send the transfer from your bank account to admin@sequoiachurch.org. Please provide password and designation instructions in a separate email to Donna.**

3. Sequoia App / Website

- Giving through the Sequoia App or Website easily allows for one-time or regular giving at any time.
- The Sequoia App allows payment with credit cards for which there is a 2% processing fee charged to Sequoia. If you prefer to use the Sequoia App to give you may consider giving an additional 2% to cover the fees incurred.
- The Sequoia App is excellent for new givers, visitors or flexible giving. Use the Give Tab in the app or give on the Sequoia website. sequoiachurch.org/give

4. Cheques

- Cheques payable to Sequoia Community Church may be mailed to the church address or deposited in the offering on Sundays. Sequoia Church - 255 Tartan Ave, Ottawa ON K2J3T1
- Cheques incur no bank fees for Sequoia.
- **Cheques made payable to Sequoia Community Church can be mailed to the church office or deposited on Sunday in the offering basket at Guest Services.**

5. Cash

- Sequoia accepts cash during worship gatherings.
- There are no fees with cash.
- **Cash may be deposited on Sunday in the offering basket at Guest Services.**