St Paul’s Church

Hadley Wood

Why and How to Give?

An introduction to practical Christian giving

October 2010

# How to give at St Paul’s Hadley Wood

# Introduction

I present this booklet to you in order to help you think through and prayerfully review your Christian giving to St Paul’s Church, Hadley Wood. The Council of the Church are extremely grateful for the generosity and support of its members over the many years. The financial support of the ministry of St Paul’s, Hadley Wood is entirely dependent upon members of the church family as there is no outside funding from the Church of England and certainly no government funding. In fact, we have to make a contribution to the Church of England for the central training and administration costs of the Church. The regular ministry of St Paul’s (salaries and expenses) is totally dependent upon your gifts and for that we are extremely grateful. The purpose of this booklet is to lay out some principles of Christian giving, set the needs before you and ask you simply to ‘review’ your giving. Then in a practical way it sets out different means by which you can participate. If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer. We are very grateful for all his hard work.

In summary please take this opportunity to give to the Lord’s work.

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# Why Christians give?

Here are some biblical principles to help you think through this area taken from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

Desire and Gratitude

*‘Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Saints.’* 2 Corinthians 8:4. This church in Corinth had a desire to give before they actually gave - they were hungry to give as they recognised the grace that God had given them. ‘*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*’ 1 Corinthians 8:9. A commitment to Jesus Christ as both Lord and Saviour will affect the way we use our money along with many other areas of life. Giving to God’s work is done out of gratitude for what God, in Christ, has done for us. Are you hungry to give out of gratitude for all that God has blessed you with both materially and spiritually?

Generosity and Cheerfulness

Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to be ready to give, ‘*generously and not grudgingly*.’ 1 Corinthians 9:5. If we have thought, planned and prayed about our giving then we will give far more generously than if we give at the rush of the collection plate or in response to a last minute appeal. Also, ‘*each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver*.’ 2 Corinthians 9:7. We should not feel under pressure to give and if we don’t want to, that’s fine! Giving is an issue of the heart between God and the giver. God also loves a cheerful giver because he himself is a cheerful giver and is the source of all good things. ‘*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*’ 2 Corinthians 9:8. As God is the source of all grace, we can trust God to provide us with all that we need, so that we can be generous and cheerful givers. Can you trust God with the money he has given you?

Blessings and thankfulness

God will bless you as you give, (not with more money necessarily). ‘*Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*’ 2 Corinthians 9:10-11. The more one gives the greater the enrichment, and the greater the enrichment the greater the resources to give. So the more you give the more God can give to you. Also as people receive your gifts it results in thanksgiving to God. What a privilege that thanksgiving to God results from your generosity.

# How much should I give?

Jesus says, ‘*Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple,*’ Luke 14:33. A Christian recognises that everything we have comes from God and that we are accountable to Him for the way in which we use His gifts.

The New Testament does not lay down laws about how much we are to give. Paul suggests that the amount we given should be proportional to what one has (2 Corinthians 8:12). Many Christians choose to use the Old Testament tithe of 10% (before tax and expenses) as a guideline, which is a good one. Some give more, some less. The level of giving is between the believer and God alone. So if an average salary is say £18,000 (a very conservative guess for the area) a tithe of that would represent £1800. Spread out over a month that would represent £150.

# What are the needs?

We have estimated in our budget that total expenditure for the year 2010 will be approximately £86,123, which will represent a deficit of £10,559 if giving remains at current levels. Our deficit will only be met if our giving increases by £10,559, which will require us to increase our giving by an additional 16.9% in order to balance the books. So if we are giving £1000 a year, we would have to increase our giving by £169. Obviously some people give more and less than this amount.

There is no reason why the ministry here at St Paul’s cannot be funded. The best way for Churches to do this is for many people to share this burden and it is not left to a few. There are currently 129 people on the electoral role, if we all shared that out equally then our contribution would be £13 a week. If only half of us gave then it would still only mean a contribution of £26. If everyone on an average salary gave £150 a month then it would only take 48 of us to meet the budget.

The figures speak for themselves. We need to address our giving as giving is a spiritual issue and it is not a matter of a few coins on the plate. Those who are not earning and on a low pension are not asked to give what they cannot afford.

But when you review your giving ask yourself the question - how much would you be prepared to pay for the eternal things of life? As we know from scripture there will be only two things that last for eternity - God’s word and people with God’s word in them. Here at St Paul’s we are in the business of investing God’s word into people so that they last for eternity. Be generous and invest for eternity- the investment in eternity can only go up, unlike the world’s investments which may go up or down. So please review your giving in the light of eternity.

# How to give?

The best way to give if you are regular member of the church family is through the standing order system. This regular method of giving enables us to budget and plan the ministry with certainty and confidence. Also if you are a taxpayer, a small amount of paperwork enables us to recover the tax you have paid on your gift, increasing its value.

Regularly

One-off gifts are always appreciated and may be appropriate in some circumstances (e.g. when you receive unforeseen bonus, capital gain, inheritance or when you are responding to a particular need). Wherever possible, however, a planned and regular approach is to be encouraged. It is almost impossible for St Paul’s to make plans if we have no idea what financial support our church family intend to give.

Tax-efficiently

To encourage charitable giving, the government allows tax to be reclaimed on donations made to churches. If you are a basic rate tax payer, this means the value of your gift may be increased by 28%. If you are a higher tax payer, potentially your gift is worth 67% more than the net cost to you. Given the benefits, please, please take advantage of these methods if at all possible.

# Other Notes

**Your Employer**: Several employers operate matching schemes whereby they will donate a sum proportional to the amount you give. Please take the trouble to find out whether this is a possibility.

**Wills**: Please consider making a gift to St Paul’s. You may be able to give in a way that hasn’t been possible in your lifetime. If you benefit from someone else’s will, it is possible to give to St Paul’s in such a way as to manage your inheritance tax liabilities.

**Changing Circumstances**: Please keep your giving to St Paul’s under review and adjust it as necessary. The more notice that you can give us about your changing circumstances; the easier it is to plan. Please note that once you have signed a Gift Aid form you are not locked into it and may be able to stop it at any time.

**Moving Away**: You may still be keen to support financially the work here at St Paul’s, but do keep us informed of any changes of your address.

**Shares and Tax**: The giving of shares can have an enormous tax advantage. Also if you receive a tax rebate you may donate this directly to St Paul’s. Please contact the Treasurer for more information if you would like to use any of these options.

# Methods of Giving

Gift Aid Forms

Tax-efficient giving is now very straightforward. Taxpayers can fill in a single form for each charity to which they give money. This allows the charity to reclaim tax on every payment made (whether regular or irregular and of whatever size) until further notice and it costs the giver nothing extra. We would therefore ask that every taxpayer at St Paul’s completes a Gift Aid Form, even if, at this stage, you aren't able to make a gift. If at some stage in the future you stop paying tax, or you don’t expect to pay very much tax, you must let us know.

Pledge Forms

Whatever method you choose, if you intend to give on a regular basis, please complete and return the Pledge form as this informs St Paul’s of your intentions and so helps us plan.

# FOR TAX PAYERS

**1. Standing Order**

**How does it work?**

You specify the size of the gift and how often you would like to make the payment direct from your bank account to that of the church’s bank account. The church then reclaims the tax at the basic rate on your gift. Higher rate tax payers declare gifts in their tax return and receive tax relief on the value of the gifts made.

**What are the benefits?**

You don’t have to worry about remembering to write out a cheque, etc.

Your and St Paul’s paper-work is reduced once it is set up.

You spread your giving out over the year, even when away from home.

It is the easiest way for St Paul's to manage the budget.

**What do I need to do?**

If you are a higher rate tax payer then you need to claim back the tax relief in your tax return.

Fill in the Standing Order Form, Pledge Form, and Gift Aid Form, which we have incorporated onto one form.

Send the signed and completed form to the Treasurer. We will do the rest.

2. Payroll Giving

**How it works?**

Inform your employer that you would like to give to St Paul’s. You specify the amount and the frequency. Your employer then deducts the amount from your salary, before tax is deducted, and it is forwarded to St Paul’s church via a giving agency.

**What are the benefits?**

You don’t have to worry about remembering to write out a cheque.

Your paper-work and St Paul’s paperwork is reduced once it is set up.

You spread your giving out over the year, even when away from home.

It is the easiest way for St Paul's to manage the budget.

Higher-rate tax payers don’t need to worry about reclaiming tax in their tax return.

Some employers operate some form of matching scheme for contributions made. However, some employers may charge an administration fee.

**What do I need to do?**

Find out if your employer offers a payroll scheme. If they do then find out how to use it and set it up advising them of the church bank details on the standing order form where the money should be transferred.

Fill in the Pledge Form and advise the Treasurer that you have set up a payroll giving scheme, so that the transfers can be traced into the account.

3. Regular cash and cheque gifts

**How does it work?**

You make gifts by cheque or cash by placing them in the offering box or when the collection is taken. Alternatively, you can send cheques to the Treasurer. The church reclaims the tax at the basic rate on your gift. Higher rate tax payers declare gifts in their tax return and receive relief on the value of the gifts made.

**What are the benefits?**

We are always grateful for gifts, but it is our least preferred option as a lot of remembering, checking and paperwork is involved.

**What do I need to do?**

Place your cash or cheques in an envelope identifying that you are the donor.

Place the envelope in the offering box, collection bag or send it to the Treasurer.

Fill in the Pledge and Gift Aid form and return it to the Treasurer.

Remember if you are a higher rate tax player you can claim back the tax relief. This means that the real cost to you of making the gift is less than the upfront amount you give.

In order to claim back tax on your gift at the basic rate, we must be able to demonstrate that you have actually made the gift and completed the Gift Aid form. Therefore, if you make a cash gift you must ensure that we can identify you as the donor.

# FOR NON-TAX PAYERS

As a non-tax payer, the following methods are open to you. The standing order method is still our preferred option as it reduces the amount of cash being handled and enables the church to plan ahead with its finances. So if you intend to give on a regular basis please fill in the Pledge form as this helps us to budget.

1. Standing Order

**How does it work?**

Money is transferred automatically from your bank account to the church’s account. You specify the amount and frequency (monthly, quarterly or annually).

**What are the benefits?**

You don’t have to worry about remembering to write out cheques.

Paperwork is reduced, both for you (no cheques cash to handle) and for St Paul’s (fewer cheques and cash to handle).

**What do I need to do?**

Fill in the Standing Order and Pledge form and return to the Treasurer.

2. Regular cash and cheques

**How does it work?**

You make gifts by cheque or cash in the offering box and collection bags. Alternatively you can send a cheque direct to the Treasurer.

**What are the benefits?**

This is our least preferred option as cheques and cash have to be handled.

**What do I need to do?**

Place cash or cheque gift in the offering box or in the collection bags or send it to the Treasurer.

Fill in the Pledge form and return to the Treasurer.

Thank you for taking the time to read this through. We are grateful for your gifts and we thank the Lord for them.