



Equipment:

You will need - DVD player, TV, pens, leaders' guide and course members' sheets for everyone in the group.



Timings:

This material within the session is timed to run for around 60 minutes to leave plenty of time for informal discussion at the beginning of the session to help people relax and feel at ease in the group.



Session Aims:

- Acknowledging that money is an important part of all our lives
- Understanding that it's just as important for the church
- Returning to what it means when we say "All we have comes from you and of your own do we give you"
- Opportunity to think and pray about our giving
- Continuing to create a positive learning atmosphere in the group as some members may be uncomfortable with this subject (though Jesus wasn't).



Welcome: (10 minutes)

Welcome people to the session and welcome those who are joining the group for the first time. Briefly recap what was covered in session 1 and 2.

Ask the group to chat in pairs and tell each other what their first memory of money was.



Prayer: (1 minute)

Hand out the course members' sheets and invite everyone to join in praying:

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you. Amen.**



Exercise: The Price is Right (6 minutes)

Whether we know the price of something depends on our own lifestyle. We may have heard stories of politicians who have no idea of the price of a pint of milk or a loaf of bread. This exercise helps us take a light-hearted approach to what can be a tricky subject.

Ask the members of the group to look at the Exercise “The Price is Right” in the members booklets.

The Price is Right

Each week and month we choose how to spend some of our money.

If you chose to treat yourself to some of these things next week, how much would you expect to pay?

Fish and Chips	£
Cinema ticket	£
Coffee in town	£
Bottle of wine from the supermarket	£
Pint of beer in the pub	£
Ticket to your local football team	£
Holiday	£
The Mona Lisa	£

DVD 3:1 (3 minutes)



Watch the first part of the Session 3 DVD. Don't forget that there is a subtitle option on the DVD if that would be useful to members of the group. Pause the DVD when the screen goes black.

DVD content

Spending money in everyday life



Bible: 2 Corinthians 9 6-10 (20 minutes)

Explain that the passage that is about to be read follows some teaching from Paul about generosity in financial giving amongst the early church. The church in Corinth had previously promised some financial help to the church in Jerusalem which had the result of encouraging other churches in the region to follow suit. However, the church in Corinth seems to have lost enthusiasm for actually getting around to sending the gift and so Paul has just reminded the church in Corinth to make sure they actually send the money as promised.

Ask a member of the group to read out the passage, you may like to ask someone in advance to avoid putting someone on the spot!

2 Corinthians 9 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

⁶ Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

*‘They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures for ever.’*

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

After the passage has been read, ask the group for any immediate comments or thoughts about the passage. Then consider the following questions:

- We're used to charity appeals on TV and in the press. Which charities are your friends and family the most likely to give to and why?
- When Paul talks about the sower, what does this illustration show us about giving?
- What is your reaction to verse 8? How might this apply to someone who has problems with debt? Does this mean that all wealthy people have been blessed by God?
- From the passage what suggestions are made to help us decide how to give? What are some benefits of generous giving?

DVD 3:2 (5 minutes)

Watch the last section of the DVD and then turn off the DVD.

DVD content

God, money and me – How do we decide how much to give?



Exercise: St Elsewhere's (10 minutes)



Ask the members of the group to look at the Exercise “St Elsewhere” in the members booklets (Supplementary Sheet 1 to this week's Leaders' Guide), which contains (made up!) descriptions of people.

In threes, talk together and, for each one answer the following questions:

1. How do you think they are deciding how much to give to their church?
2. Based on the principles we have been looking at on this course, what factors do you think they should take in to account and what would be an amount for them to give each week (or month)

Prayer: (3 minutes)



John Wesley worked out how much he needed to live on, and he gave away the rest. In the beginning, he had very little income and he started off not really giving away very much. However, by the end of his life he had money coming in from absolutely everywhere, and he still lived on the amount of money he needed and therefore he gave more and more away.

God knows us better than we know ourselves and understands that all our circumstances are different and therefore our giving will be different.

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. (2 Corinthians 8:12).

In the second film clip the presenters suggested some ways of deciding whether you are giving generously

- When I look at my giving in relation to my income, is the percentage I'm giving away realistic?
- Does my giving in all its forms have an impact on my lifestyle? Can I identify an element of sacrifice to my giving?
- Is my giving a priority from what I receive each week or each month, rather than what's left over?
- If what I give away was given back to me, would it make a real difference to me? Would I notice?

Spend some time reflecting on how you decided to give the amount you presently give and ask God to show you any changes he is calling you to make as you live a life of generosity, gift and grace.

Take Away activity: (1 minute)



In the members' booklet, spend some time reflecting on the steps in giving as we grow as disciples. Ask God to show you where you are, and, as you grow as his disciple, what the next steps are that he is calling you to take.

Session 3 - Supplementary Sheet 1

St Elsewhere's

Here are some (made up!) descriptions of people. In threes, look at the scenarios and, for each one, answer the following questions:

1. How do you think they are currently deciding how much to give to their church?
2. Based on the principles we have been looking at in this session, what factors do you think they should consider? What would be an amount for them to give each week (or month)?

Max A Million

Max is a successful businessman aged 55 with a string of businesses and a lifestyle to match. As the children have now left home, he and his wife make sure that they attend all the society events in the county and hosts a big party for all his staff once a year. The rest of the year is punctuated by holidays (skiing in February and a cruise in the Autumn), and he and his wife eat out on a Friday or Saturday if they haven't got a function to attend. He supports the local church (along with other local charities) and he and his wife have a joint standing order for £50 per month.

Justin Case

Justin is now divorced and in his 40s. He attends his local church from time to time, (if he hasn't got something else that he needs to do) and likes to think that it will be there for his funeral. He has a management position at the local council and enjoys watching football (he's a season ticket holder) and having a few beers with his colleagues on a Friday night. He always thinks that when he retires he might have time to go to church more often as he finds the people very welcoming. However, he doesn't really understand what the church does with the money that people put in the offering plate (it's the Church of England so surely the government pays for the clergy), but he usually puts a few pound coins into the plate when he's there – after all, they give him coffee and biscuits at the end.

Penny Checker

Penny is a young mum with three children and they have been coming along to the local church for about 18 months, following an invitation to Messy Church. The children enjoy Sunday School, and she has started to make friends with some of the other parents. Though Penny's husband doesn't come with her, he's happy for her and the children to be out on a Sunday morning leaving him in peace with the Sunday papers and it avoids her paying to entertain the children at the local soft play centre. Following the birth of baby number three, Penny hasn't gone back to work because of the high costs of childcare, and they are struggling with the mortgage in their terraced house. Penny doesn't give any money in the Sunday offering but has started to help with the food and washing up at Messy Church.

Widow S Mite

Widow has been a faithful member of the same church all her life, having been christened as a baby, confirmed, married and seeing her own children christened and married there. Her husband had worked in the local engineering foundry and she had some part time jobs when her children had grown up, but never earned enough to have her own pension. Having been widowed five years ago, she spends time ensuring that the church building is welcoming, preparing flowers and cleaning the brass. She doesn't pay tax but uses planned giving envelopes and has recently increased her giving to £10 per week after hearing a talk about giving 10% to the local church.