***Giving is a transforming challenge***

Giving is the most challenging because it challenges directly

The selfishness that is at the heart of many powerful economic

Systems, which are at the root of personal selfishness and ultimately sin; disposal of waste, wealth, food, ecology of the earth and stewardship of creation.

***Questions for consideration.***

* Can your home or presence be a gift to other, an offer of welcome, peace and friendship? Even to those who live on the edge of church or those who feel excluded.
* How can we develop our giving to be in partnership with others less fortunate than ourselves
* Many countries and communities are reliant on the giving of others. How can we support them?

Excerpts from

**Roberts Andrew** *Holy Habits*, Malcolm Down Publishing 2016

Developing Holy Habits

**5. Giving**

**The Adventure of Discipleship**

Discipleship is an adventure, but there will be days when we are more enthusiastic about it and others when we would rather do spiritual equivalent of snuggling back under the duvet !

**The Aim of Discipleship**

The aim of Discipleship is to develop within ourselves a ‘Christ like character‘ as a focus to enable the transformation of the world, so the Kingdom of God can a visible and tangible presence here on earth. Discipleship is personal and relational. It flows from the relationship we have with the one who calls us to follow, Jesus.

**Sacrificial nature of Discipleship**

Sacrifice is at the heart of discipleship and suffering, and to a greater or less extent, it is inevitable on the adventure. Jesus was not slow in challenging Simon Peter and his companions to go beyond their experience and comfort zones, thereby helping them grow in confidence. Sometimes in our discipleship there will be those moments when we are called to go beyond our comfort zones and discover Gods resources in new ways, and there will be times when we need to encourage others to take steps of faith on the adventure of discipleship. However living sacrificially, in obedience to the call of Jesus, may also involve suffering because of our association with the one we follow. This could be in the form of snide comments, being excluded from conversation or activities, or to stand alongside the people whom the rest of society would exclude.

**The Nurture of Discipleship**

As we practice the art of discipleship, so the fruits of holiness and Christ like character emerge and blossom, along with resilience, strength and faith to keep going. We need to learn to live rhythmically if we are to nurture 10 Holy Habits.

**Holy Habits**

If we are to commit ourselves and to encourage our church community to live rhythmically and develop discipleship, then we need guidelines; we need to develop tools to enable us to be ‘Christ like’ in character and focus. In other words, to develop and nurture ‘habits’ and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us on the adventure and excitement of discipleship.

**The Fifth Holy Habit is Giving.**

**Think about all the ‘Giving’ stories from the Bible**

**Early Christians**

Early Christians were following on from the Essenes in Qumran. Their model for giving was to pool their resources, wealth, food etc, to create a common fund which could support those in need.

Jesus would have been used to this model of generosity and giving, and his disciples followed his lead.

However the disciples also maintained sources of income and business for the early community.

Key Points in Giving

1. The nature of God
2. Giving is the key part of God’s nature and it is possible to read the Bible as a story of Giving
3. Even when God’s gift is rejected, God keeps on giving

The Holy Habit of Giving

**Starts with locating that thinking, within the generous, extravagant even persistent nature of God.**

Models of Giving

1. **Economic**
* **Tithes.** Tithing is a continuation of an old Jewish custom, and early Christians adopted this model to build groups to help those in need.
* **Offerings (freewill).** This is linked to Jesus teaching, where you can ‘give what you can’, and this is linked to the widows mite parable.

Different Gifts

Gifts can be varied and diverse, and we all have gifts that we share with each other. This model runs through all the Holy Habits of Discipleship,

**Gift … of time gift … of love
Gift … of yourself Gift … Of hospitality
Gift … of prayer Gift … of joy
Gift … of presence Gift… of Love**

**Gift … of Giving Gift … of acceptance**