



GIVING FOR LIFE: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

Your PCC will use this sheet to review your practice on stewardship matters, and to identify and prioritise areas for development. We're asking all PCC members to complete this ahead of the PCC meeting, and bring it with you.

A recent survey of 1100 parishes shows widespread adoption of good practice since the Giving for Life report in 2009. Average giving per planned giver has risen by 20%¹, most churches now send out thank you letters and encourage givers to review their giving once a year, 10,000 people have registered with the Parish Buying service and legacy income has risen to record levels. Perhaps more importantly we're hearing lots of stories of church members feeling better equipped to see how the challenge of generosity fits within their Christian life. Most churches, though, can still find some areas for improvement.

1 *When did you last hear a sermon that included a message on stewardship, generosity or giving money?*

- Within the last 6 months, Within the last year, Within the last 3 years,
 Within the last 5 years, Don't know

Teaching and Preaching on matters of generosity and stewardship are essential if we are to learn to live generously as disciples of Jesus. It's not just about giving, nor just about money – but to help us gain insight into the amazing generosity of God, and seek to respond to it. Almost 70% of the 1100 respondents to our survey have heard a message within the last year, and two thirds of these within the last six months. See www.parishresources.org.uk/giving/preaching for material to support this.

2 *When thinking about how your church communicates with givers which of the following do you talk about? (tick all that apply)*

- Giving as a response to God's generosity The costs and financial needs of the church
 Giving to support a clearly articulated vision for the future Giving in the context of discipleship
 The impact of giving in enabling the church's mission and ministry

It's important to communicate with givers from several different perspectives. All too often churches focus on their cost or budget shortfall, but givers need to hear wider faith perspectives, and what their giving enables in terms of both current ministry and future vision. This helps them decide how to allocate their giving between church and the other causes and charities the Lord has put on their hearts.

See www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife for ideas to help you do this.

¹ 2014 compared with 2009

3 *When did your PCC last send a thank you letter to your planned givers?*

- Within the last year, Within the last 3 years, Within the last 5 years,
 Not within the last 5 years, Don't Know

Our survey tells us that half of churches send an annual thank you letters to their planned givers, and two thirds have sent one within the past three years. Sending a personal thank you values your donors, acknowledges their giving, and offers a perfect opportunity to tell them about the positive impact that their giving as a group is having on your church's mission and ministry. See www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife for templates and ideas.

4 *When did your PCC last ask the congregation to review their giving?*

- Within the last year, Within the last 3 years, Within the last 5 years,
 Not within the last 5 years, Don't Know

Most churches now conduct an annual giving review according to our survey. Four out of five have asked their congregation to review their giving within the last three years. It's much healthier to review giving on an annual basis, rather than every three or four years – it's how money works for most of us, and reminds us that giving is a key element of discipleship. See www.parishresources.org.uk/annualreview

5 *Has your PCC agreed a legacy policy and communicated this to the congregation?*

- Yes No Don't Know

Many parishes are seeing an increase in legacy gifts received because they have a Legacy Policy in place. Having a Policy helps those people who wish to include a gift in their will know that the church welcomes gifts and will use them wisely. Our research indicates many PCCs could benefit from adopting this. Find out more at www.parishresources.org.uk/legacies

6 *Does your PCC claim Gift Aid, including the Small Donations Scheme, regularly?* Yes No Don't Know

Each year parishes claim over £90 million through Gift Aid and the Small Donations Scheme BUT we're missing out on up to £10 million more. Our survey showed that 15% of PCCs have not yet claimed on the Small Donations Scheme, and a few have not claimed Gift Aid for the past two years. There is no easier way of boosting income! Use our checklists to ensure you're on top of the scheme at www.parishresources.org.uk/giftaid

7 *Is your PCC using the Parish Buying Service?* Yes No Don't Know

The Parish Buying Service enables the Church to take advantage of our overall buying power through a series of national contracts for many goods and services parishes use – energy, photocopiers, paper and office products, software, telecoms, fire safety etc. Unless you've got a good reason to buy elsewhere we'd encourage you to see this as the default option. We also offer Buying Guides to help you make good decisions about insurance, manage capital projects and view buying decisions as part of your stewardship. All this and more at www.parishbuying.org.uk

Priorities for Action:

Please identify up to three of these points that you see as priorities for action: , and
(in general addressing the points with smaller numbers will have the greatest impact)

This Giving for Life Guide has been produced by the National Stewardship Committee.

Find out more at www.parishresources.org.uk www.churchlegacy.org.uk and www.parishbuying.org.uk