

**Word Notes Sunday 08/10/17**  
**Tony Hodge: Church Unpacked - Giving**

**Summary** *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

**Key Texts: John 3:16 & Rom 12:1**

God's love moved him to give His Son. Christ's love moved him to give his all. What then is our response? To give our lives, all of our being and doings to Him who gave it all. Perhaps the best picture we have is in marriage where we make a vow to give "all that I am" to our spouse, not 50/50 but 100/100 and in my experience actions speak louder than words.

So then if all we have has come from God, and we give it all back, then we are stewards of all we have in God. If we are "sons and heirs" (Romans 8:15-17) then our attitude should be somewhere between the prodigal son and his brother. One brother took everything he was "owed" and squandered it, the other didn't even know what he had and never enjoyed it to the full as was his right (Luke 15:11-31).

If our hearts have been changed, and as we pursue Christ-like-ness, reflecting the Father as Jesus did, then our hearts will be giving hearts. Four principles apply to our giving:

- It's up to us, but don't cheat God (Acts 5:1-5)
- It's God who provides for us (Matt 17:24-27)
- It's not about rules or targets but Justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23)
- It's not for show (Matt 6:1-4)

While we don't give in order to receive there is a universal principle at work that when we sow we will also reap (2 Cor 9:6-8). What is in your investment portfolio?

**Application** *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

What does it mean to you to "offer your body as a living sacrifice" and how does that make the Christian different from the non-believer?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. Discuss the principle of sowing and reaping and the consequences of giving sparingly or generously. What is the motivation behind your giving – to bless or to be blessed, and how can we grow in Christ-like-ness in this area?

Does the model of tithes (giving into your church), offerings (giving in to other ministries) and gifts (ad-hoc giving) work for you? Does it help to plan your giving yet be free to give beyond those ideals too?

Giving is not just about money, but of our lives: time, talents as well as cash, and we can make tithes, offerings and gifts of these too. What does that mean in your life – where and how are you investing your time and talents into a) the church, b) ministries and c) the world?

**Witness** *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

We live in a nation that does like to give – examples are the various BBC appeals, the Disasters Emergency Committee appeals and our government sticking to overseas aid targets even when we have a massive national debt. Even so we come across negative attitudes in our circles. Do you seek to counter these and are you able to demonstrate "a most excellent way" through your words and deeds (1 Cor 13)?