

Generous Giving 3

Responding generously to God with our treasure



Building the Temple: 1 Chronicles 29: 1 – 20

In the third and final of our series on Generous Giving, today we look at the building of Solomon's Temple. David had established the Kingdom of Israel with the worship of God at its core. He wished to build a Temple as the centre of national worship. God told him that he could make preparations but that his son, Solomon, would oversee the actual construction. David made detailed plans for the building which would be a hugely costly endeavour. He summoned the whole people of Israel to give sacrificially and he and his leaders set an example by extremely generous giving. The giving culminated in exuberant worship as the people gave freely and joyously. A fund of money and material was ready for Solomon as he set about his task. The resulting Temple was truly magnificent and a sign of hope for the nation in good times and bad.

Our story so far:

In Week 1 we looked at the story of the Widow's Mite and reminded ourselves that God is hugely generous towards us and calls us to be generous to others. We explained that regular planned giving was very important to the Parish. In Week 2 we looked at the story of the Woman at the Well and saw how Jacob's legacy in building a well blessed many generations. We reminded ourselves that we have been able to undertake several projects in the Parish as a direct result of specific donations. The Parish Church AV system is soon to be installed and we are starting to plan for a much need new digital organ to replace our failing instrument.

Today we remind ourselves that legacy giving is a crucial source of funding for the Parish. Solomon's Temple was a legacy to the nation that helped it survive in the darkest hours. Legacies have helped us enormously, including helping to fund work with children and youth. The UK Government has recognised the importance of legacy giving to charities and has provided preferential tax rates to encourage such support. We plan to run a free, specialist seminar on this in the near future.

Gift 'Day'

In our services today and the next two weeks there will be an opportunity to respond to this teaching by placing gifts and pledges in the offering. A folder with all three handouts, plus a church booklet, will be given out after each service. Please take one and consider before God how you might bless the church and community by your giving.

Generous Giving and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dioceses and the churches within them are almost always short of money to meet the demands on them. Moreover, as church attendance decreases the diocesan requirement appears to increase! When he became Bishop of Durham, Justin Welby initiated a new approach to giving by his diocese. Instead of levying a parish share he worked with his diocese to agree what money was required. He then asked each parish to give generously to God as they felt it right – but none had a formal target. There was some nervousness as to whether this would produce enough money, but it did. And churches felt they had given joyfully and freely, not grudgingly. Encouraged by this some other dioceses have taken a similar approach and also found it a joyous experience. The Oxford Diocese maintains its traditional approach to giving but, within this parish, we are seeking to apply the underlying principles of Generous Giving. Simply put, these are that we recognise the generosity of God to us and seek to respond generously to others so that God's Kingdom may grow. As we do we will find joy in service.

May God bless you.