



In our podcast series, TV presenter Gemma Hunt uncovers stories of generosity in churches across the country. We hear about the fantastic initiatives many churches run to support their communities as well as the actions of generous individuals in those communities.

Each podcast is accompanied by a daily reflection and activity to help us reflect on God's generosity and activate it in our daily lives. We recommend listening to an episode each day over Generosity Week, perhaps when going for a short walk or over a cup of tea during a break.

Podcasts are available to listen to and download from all major podcast platforms including [Apple Podcast](#), [Google Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#).

Day One: Looking outwards to share God's love

A good person produces good from the good treasure of his heart...because the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

Luke 6:45

Reflection

On the Day of Pentecost, one minute Jesus's followers were inside four walls waiting for the unknown – uncertain and timorous; the next they were tumbling into the street, praise to God pouring out of them as the Holy Spirit had been poured into them. Onlookers, unbelievers and the religious alike were stopped in their tracks. The church was born and was on the move! From their 'holy huddle' to impacting a city, a nation and the world.

When God fills our lives, we just can't contain it. His goodness and love are so abundant that we are literally flooded out! And that leaking of love is designed to touch the lives of the world around us, in turn arresting others with God's amazing love. Here in Cornwall, the beauty of our landscape often speaks for itself and holds our gaze but we also want our words and subsequently our actions to be a reflection of the grace and beauty of our Lord Jesus, drawing attention to Him. Has God filled your heart with good treasure? Then God expects it to overflow to others through your words, impressing them not with your own wisdom but with His power.

Jenny Wreford, Generous Giving Advisor, Truro Diocese

Activity

Are your words full of grace and kindness, truth and hope? Ask God to fill you afresh. Then pick up the phone to a hurting friend or greet a lonely neighbour and bless them today with life giving, Christ centred words.

Day Two: Friendship and a foot up

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- John 10:10

Reflection

We are loved by a God of abundance. After all he gave his only son so we could enter back into a deep and loving relationship with him. Jesus' words "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" are perhaps some of the most powerful recorded in the bible. Through God's grace and generosity we are meant to thrive not just survive. Foodbanks are an invaluable source of support for those who have fallen on tough times, but going that one step further can be the difference in getting by and being helped back up.

His grace extends to relationships, we are made to be in them. How many times have we felt that we've seen God at work in others? We can witness the kingdom wherever we see God's values happening. Signs of grace by the forming of communities and friendships, the generosity of service. Acts of generosity are practical expressions of our faith. As we look to live out God's kingdom and grow more Christ like, we should perhaps ask this- how am I living in a way that helps others to experience life in its fullest?

Lou Bayliss, Giving Facilitator, Birmingham Diocese

Activity

Many projects that support the vulnerable have essential needs, but if they could have something extra, what would they like that to be? Find out what that extra is, and consider if it's something within your means to help with?

Day Three: Taking Generosity beyond the church walls

Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise

- Luke 10:36-37

Reflection

This reading is the ending to one of the most famous parables in the Bible, the Good Samaritan. A man sets off down a dangerous road, is attacked by robbers and left for dead. Two members of the man's own religious group, a priest and a Levite, pass by, but fearing for their own safety they do not assist. Then a Samaritan passes by and shows incredible generosity by risking his life to stop, tend the wounds of the injured man, and take him to safety.

The Samaritans and Jews despised each other with each group committing atrocities against the other over hundreds of years before the time of Jesus. The fact that Jesus chooses in this parable to have a Samaritan rescue a Jew teaches us that generosity is not just for those groups of people that we like or feel comfortable around, like our own church congregations. There is in fact no limit to the generosity we should show; this includes showing generosity to those that are not like us, or who we do not like or who do not like us. We live the commandment to 'go and do likewise' when we take generosity beyond our church walls.

Hannah Silcock, Regional Giving Advisor (Midlands & East)

Activity

Keep one helpful thing on your person at all time, something small, such as a trolley coin, pack of tissues, a snack and be ready to give it away to whoever might need it.

Day Four: A helping hand, not a handout

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

- 1 Peter 4.10

Reflection

Peter wrote here to encourage and instruct the dispersed and persecuted Christians of Asia Minor. As with any oppressed community some were richer, some poorer, but all suffered under their situation's weight. However, in the midst of discussing their suffering, Peter exhorts that they should be good companions to one another, giving of whatever that they have received.

Under the pandemic we have all suffered. Our liberties were reduced in order to protect and care for each other. For some this has meant financial hardship, increased mental health worries, isolation and loneliness. Yet despite this suffering we see our churches serving, and Peter tells us to serve with the strength that God supplies.

But Peter goes further, for we are not just serving to be liked or from duty, but we are serving "so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ" (v.11). Through our generosity and service we praise God. Our hands become God's hands and in their action we pray without ceasing. Through the simplest act of helping another, of giving from the wealth we have received, we are giving that gift to the body of Christ and praising him.

- *Chris Boden, Stewardship & Resources Officer, Diocese of Worcester*

Activity

Go and buy two of your favourite chocolate bar and give one away to a friend. When eating your own, think about your friend and the joy the chocolate will bring them.

Day Five: Generosity that grows

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

- 1 Peter 4:10

Reflection

Generosity has momentum.

It's easy to feel like the troubles of the world are too much for us to have an impact. Whether it be a global pandemic, institutional racism, environmental disasters, or any number of other major issues that cause pain and hurt across the world... is there anything we can do to actually make a difference?

This is where a generous spirit comes into play. An act of generosity today becomes a wave of generosity tomorrow. We have been created in the image of God, a God who is generous beyond measure. When we lean into that part of our character, when we purposefully look for opportunities to share that generosity within our communities, you can be sure that the impact will be felt far beyond the first act.

We might not see the culmination of that generous act, but we can be confident that as we are generous to others so that generosity spreads and multiplies. People will see and experience it and be encouraged to be generous in their own way, with whatever they have to share with the world around them.

- David Stout, Regional Giving Advisor (North)

Activity

What gift have you received to serve others? It may be something practical like hospitality or financial generosity... Or perhaps you can share time with others, to be a listening ear? Consider your gifting and find one opportunity today to share it with the world.

Day Six: A generous youth for a generous world tomorrow

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

- Luke 6:38

Reflection

Today's podcast shows how we can unlock generosity when we share what we believe God is calling us to do, or, as Archbishop Rowan Williams put it, when we "find out what God is doing and join in". People are inspired to be generous when they feel that being generous matters, that without their generosity God's work will not be fulfilled. We can sometimes be almost apologetic for asking for people's generosity, yet generosity is transformative and integral to our faith and to living it out.

The podcast shows how young people in the parish benefited from people's generosity, but of course the church benefited too, generosity is not a one-way street. The generosity brought the energy, hope, idealism, passion and action of young people into the church and we could all do with more of that. One of the joys of generosity is that it inspires generosity in return, and that it sets off a virtuous cycle. It is God's economy in action, where acts of kindness inspire others and the call to love God and our neighbour transforms our neighbourhoods. Give, and it will be given to you...

- Jonathan de Bernhardt Wood, National Giving Advisor

Activity

Think about what today holds. Who will you see? Where will you go? What will you do? Think about how you can incorporate a simple act of kindness within it, so that you can begin that virtuous cycle of generosity.

Day Seven: Finding the individual in the crisis

I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

- Matthew 25:36

Reflection

In our reading Jesus affirms that help and kindness offered to another person is help and kindness offered to him.

What do you see? What is your perspective of the needy? Do you see a child of God in need of help and support? Because how you see people determines how you relate to them. Our calling as Christians is not just for ourselves but to share God's love and generosity with all and this is the culture in the Diocese of Chichester, supporting people in different situations because the only question that really matters is do we love Jesus and do we wish to see his will done on earth? Jesus said. "Just as you loved one of the least of these, who are members of my family, you loved me."

- Revd Martha Weatherill, Generous Giving Training Manager

Activity

Is there someone you pass everyday who you've never really engaged with before? Today, take a moment to say 'hello' and start a conversation.

Day Eight: Helping yourself can help others

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

- Matthew 13:31-32

Reflection

Think about a time you received something from someone else. What opportunities were there for you to use the gift you received to help another? Is it enough to just say 'thank you' when we receive something, or does one good turn deserve another? What do many small acts add up to? Could we ourselves turn a mustard seed into a tree?

In our reading, Jesus tells us that small beginnings can have wide reach. If we can act generously as a response to the generosity we have received, we can be the seed from which wide branches of generosity can spread out.

When we are low, it can feel hard to feel like we have anything to offer others, when in fact, even simple acts like listening and talking can be small offerings of generosity that lift others around us.

God assures us that we can rely on him to lift us up when we are down. God is love, and his love is always with us. With his strength we can give forward of the many gifts we are blessed with. Just as Jesus commanded his disciples to love one another as he loved them, so our small acts of generosity can spread God's love to others and throughout the wider world.

- Helen Simpkins, Regional Giving Advisor (South)

Activity

Reflect at the end of the day on everything you have been given today by others. In what ways can you give back to these people?

Bonus Content: Sharing skills to be stronger together

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- Hebrews 13:15,16

Reflection

Generosity through community.

Being in a community is important to us as human beings. We are a social species. We collaborate. We are comfortable in the sharing of our space with others. There are times, often when we are young and at school, where we are surrounded by hundreds of people who we may describe as our close community. At other times, it may just be one other, but having that space where we feel 'at home' with someone else is essential for our continued health.

Our church can be this also. A place where we share with one another, often outside of the normal social boundaries, in such a way that builds each other closer together and closer to God.

Developing these communities is important not only for our wellbeing, but also for helping us share God's love with greater impact.

Communities of generous believers can practically achieve more through having more hands at work. However, just the very act of a group of people from different backgrounds and ages, is a statement of generosity that shows the world the character of a generous God.

Sometimes it's tricky, but these communities of believers sharing life together is our calling.

David Stout, Regional Giving Advisor (North)

Activity

Who are your people? Take some time to reflect on those around you, with whom you share your faith journey. Pray for them individually and collectively for how you may follow God's call in your wider community today.

Watch the Generosity Week online service

Led by St Gabriel's Church, Greystones with the sermon delivered by Bishop Guli from Chelmsford Cathedral.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/encouraging-generosity/ideas-activating-generosity/generosity-1>