

Giving in difficult times

Introduction

We are going through difficult times as a country due to the coronavirus and things are going to get worse before they get better, but we have a big God who is there for us!

People in our church are going to be affected by a number of issues, be it illness, mental health, isolation or financial hardship.

The Pastoral Staff, Elders and other Ministry Leaders are working hard to ensure that we can operate as many church activities and programmes as possible within the present restrictions. In addition to this, we have contacted as many of our fellowship as possible over the last two weeks to assess their needs and try to work out how we can engage with you all either through the church App, website, by a phone call or by post.

We are taking steps to claim what we can from the Government at this time and have furloughed some staff and will re-engage these once we have something for them to do.

Over this time, however long it is, we will save some costs but will need to continue to engage all our Pastoral Staff to maintain our ministries and to deal with the significant workload in reshaping our church life to deal with the present and future circumstances. It's important that we support and encourage them as they seek God's help in moving us forward.

This is a time where we need to work together to maintain the fellowship and come out of this stronger, particularly with our relationship with the Lord and our fellow believers.

Things are different but with the help of Zoom, live streaming and other means we can get through this period, but we need you all to engage with things where you can and on a consistent basis.

What are the financial issues that we are going to face?

- A reduction in our Sunday offerings as we are not meeting.
- A reduction in our ongoing giving through the bank as some may be affected by the loss of a job or a reduction in self-employed income.

What is the real challenge?

- For those who are able - to give more.
- Give from what you are going to save i.e. not eating out, using less fuel, not going on holiday or to special events etc. Some of the amounts saved could be given to the Lord's work!
- Defer your giving to the building project for a few months and give more to the general fund.

In times like these, first we need to trust the Lord and then act!

What are the other challenges that lie ahead?

The early church supported each other both spiritually and practically. Those who had much were able to share with those who had little. We need to be thinking and operating like this, in these days.

Acts 2 v 43-47:

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together

with glad and sincere hearts,⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

There will be people in our church community who will be hit, fairly hard, financially by the current issues and even after going through the various Government schemes, either do not qualify for support or for very little.

We have decided to set up a separate fund that we could administer and provide financial support for people in need. This fund is the Coronavirus Support Fund and applications can be made for small grants and information about this can be found elsewhere on the church website and App.

At present, we have some funds that have been given but we need more people to take this to heart and exercise compassion for those who are struggling financially.

Can I encourage you to give to this, as we can really make a difference if we are willing to give generously from that which God has blessed us with.

God loves a cheerful giver – 2 Cor 9 v 6-9

Generosity Encouraged

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

Are you willing to sow generously and give a little extra to help relieve some of the pain and suffering that some of your church community are going to encounter in the weeks and months ahead?

Can I urge you to take these things to the Lord and then act in obedience.

We have been given so much and now is the time to give back what we can to His work!

How can I make my gift?

You can go onto the church App, tap the giving button and follow the instructions and choose to give to either the general fund or the coronavirus fund. You can give via the church website by accessing the ‘church at home’ section and then make your way down to the give section, clear instructions are there for you to follow. If you are not able to give in this way then send a cheque made payable to ‘Sunbridge Road Mission’ to Andrew Parker, 15 Meadow Court, Allerton, Bradford, BD15 9JZ or call Andrew if you need further assistance on 07740 308422.

Your giving does really make a difference!

Bless you all, at this time. Nothing is too hard for God!

Andrew Parker