

MONEY, GIVING & GOD

Financial giving and
faithfulness at Eastgate

God gives first...

“I HAVE NO NEED OF A BULL FROM YOUR STALL OR OF GOATS FROM YOUR PENS, FOR EVERY ANIMAL OF THE FOREST IS MINE, AND THE CATTLE ON A THOUSAND HILLS. I KNOW EVERY BIRD IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND THE INSECTS IN THE FIELDS ARE MINE. IF I WERE HUNGRY, I WOULD NOT TELL YOU, FOR THE WORLD IS MINE, AND ALL THAT IS IN IT.”

PSALM 50:9-12

It might seem counter-intuitive to begin a resource on giving in this way, but God does not need our generosity; Jesus provided a coin from a fish's mouth,¹ fed a multitude with a boy's packed lunch² and provided excellent wine for a wedding party that had already drunk a village dry.³

God does not have a single need. He spoke the whole of creation into being; anything we have to offer has already been gifted to us. God gives even before we do. So, as we think about giving of any kind, we are confronted by and encouraged that our giving is a loving response to the Giver from whom we have received everything we have, our lives included, that breath you just took: EVERYTHING!

Pause in prayer and thank God for all you have: everything is from Him and designated for you to use to His glory.

We give because of love

“BUT SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU AS WELL.”

MATTHEW 6:33

“HONOUR THE LORD WITH YOUR WEALTH, WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR CROPS; THEN YOUR BARNs WILL BE FILLED TO OVERFLOWING, AND YOUR VATS WILL BRIM OVER WITH NEW WINE.”

PROVERBS 3:9-10

Giving gifts as a sign of love is an inescapable part of human nature: watch a parent and child with one another, besotted lovers, old friends. They all express mutual kindness and care. Giving the gifts of time, symbols of appreciation and support, and practical service through personal talents flows out of, builds, deepens, and grows loving relationships.

God creates us for His glory. We were made to be loved by Him. He gives Himself to us in Jesus. All we have is from Him; therefore, it is all a means by which He will be glorified.⁴ We are loved in Christ Jesus; God's saving love has done all we need for a relationship with Him. As we love Him in response, giving from what we have is one of the primary ways we respond to that love. Giving is part of our loving worship.

In our relationship with God, giving is primary, not because we owe God, but as beloved children, we respond in generous love because that is what we have received.

Aroha mai, aroha atu.
From love received, love is given.

Take time to examine your own heart in God's presence.

How is giving part of your response to God's love?

We give as a top priority

“JESUS REPLIED: ‘LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: ‘LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.’ ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS HANG ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS.”

MATTHEW 22:37-40

“NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. EITHER YOU WILL HATE THE ONE AND LOVE THE OTHER, OR YOU WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE ONE AND DESPISE THE OTHER. YOU CANNOT SERVE BOTH GOD AND MONEY.”

MATTHEW 6:24

What we do with our income says a lot about our main priority. Which will you serve: God or money? That’s the question Jesus posed to those who first heard him preach; it’s a question that is still powerful and relevant today.

God’s rightful place is to have our first allegiance before any family, cultural or personal values. Giving is not just an essential part of our relationship with God; it is to have priority in that relationship. We see evidence of our values by examining our financial records. Is God first in your finances? What does your bank account and spending say?

Some exploit this truth for their own selfish gains. Pressure is put on people to give to make the pastors rich or fund lavish vanity projects: extravagant buildings, expensive cars and exclusive travel. There may even be a promise that providing money will guarantee answers to prayer. That puts the love of wealth before love for God. At Eastgate, we will have no part in that kind of exploitation.

Christians give as a top priority, reflecting God’s first place in our allegiances but not ignoring our other responsibilities or the broader teaching of Scripture.

Think about your finances—is God seen to be your top priority in how you structure them?

Why and how we give

“REMEMBER THIS: WHOEVER SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY, AND WHOEVER SOWS GENEROUSLY WILL ALSO REAP GENEROUSLY. 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.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7

Rarely has anyone given financially by accident. It takes a clear choice to put God first and line up our finances accordingly. An outward show or pretence that God is first may fool some or even yourself, but it does not fool God.⁵

We give on purpose:

- **Generously**—not ‘sowing sparingly’, i.e. looking at the minimum we can get away with, but giving with the overflow of love.
- **Decided in your heart**—a decision is made after planning, considering, praying, and thinking through what Scripture says.
- **Not under compulsion**—having decided to give, action is taken, and money is given freely, with no one ‘laying down the law’ or putting pressure on you.
- **Cheerfully**—there is peace and enjoyment in giving to God, enacting our surrender in faith, and looking to Him to do what only He can do.

Consider your own heart—are you in a place where you can give on purpose in generous, decisive, willing and joyful ways?

What’s next for you?

Loving others through giving

“THIS SERVICE [GIVING] THAT YOU PERFORM IS NOT ONLY SUPPLYING THE NEEDS OF THE LORD’S PEOPLE BUT IS ALSO OVERFLOWING IN MANY EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS TO GOD. BECAUSE OF THE SERVICE BY WHICH YOU HAVE PROVED YOURSELVES, OTHERS WILL PRAISE GOD FOR THE OBEDIENCE THAT ACCOMPANIES YOUR CONFESSION OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, AND FOR YOUR GENEROSITY IN SHARING WITH THEM AND EVERYONE ELSE.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:12-13

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about giving, pointing to how God provides for His people. By giving in worship, each person in a congregation helps provide for church ministries and staff. Eastgate’s pastors and church staff are funded from within our church community.

The financial provision of our congregation’s generosity allows others to hear of God’s love and grace in Jesus. Outreach is started, community relationship is formed, and people talk of Jesus; others hear about Him and come to know eternal life in His name.

Our giving means people are cared for, prayed for, taught, supported and loved. This work is not limited to us but impacts citywide, nationally and internationally.

All of it leads to God’s praise and glory in hearts and transformed lives through thankful praise. Giving is productive as it provides for the work and workers of God’s church.

Giving is not a simplistic ‘vending machine’ that promises money in/ product out. Still, through service, sacrifice and working together, we see a spirit of generosity in a church of people faithfully holding to the hope that Jesus brings as we share Him with others.

What motivates you to give?

How have you seen the productive nature of giving work its way out in Eastgate?

Keep on giving

“HONOUR THE LORD WITH YOUR WEALTH, WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR CROPS; THEN YOUR BARNs WILL BE FILLED TO OVERFLOWING, AND YOUR VATS WILL BRIM OVER WITH NEW WINE.”

PROVERBS 3:9-10

“NOW ABOUT THE COLLECTION FOR THE LORD’S PEOPLE: DO WHAT I TOLD THE GALATIAN CHURCHES TO DO. ON THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK, EACH ONE OF YOU SHOULD SET ASIDE A SUM OF MONEY IN KEEPING WITH YOUR INCOME, SAVING IT UP, SO THAT WHEN I COME NO COLLECTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE.”

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2

Giving in the Old Testament is established as a repeated and regular pattern.⁶ The New Testament underlines this typical pattern as weekly and structured.⁷ Most of us aren’t tied to harvest cycles anymore, and many receive income fortnightly. We are to apply Scripture’s giving principles in ways that make the most sense today.

The scriptural insistence is that we are to persist in the patterns of giving according to our income pattern (yearly income = annual gift, weekly income = weekly offering), not sporadic or chaotic, but persistent and orderly, not as an afterthought but as a first priority.

We are to give in a manner that aligns with the income we have received and what we believe about the Lord’s call and priority in our lives.

What is the pattern of income in your life?

How can you order your giving to reflect that pattern?

What would get in the way of persistent giving?

Are any obstacles a choice you’re making or something beyond your control?

The power of generosity

“AS JESUS LOOKED UP, HE SAW THE RICH PUTTING THEIR GIFTS INTO THE TEMPLE TREASURY. HE ALSO SAW A POOR WIDOW PUT IN TWO TINY COPPER COINS. ‘TRULY I TELL YOU,’ HE SAID, ‘THIS POOR WIDOW HAS PUT IN MORE THAN ALL THE OTHERS. ALL THESE PEOPLE GAVE THEIR GIFTS OUT OF THEIR WEALTH, BUT SHE OUT OF HER POVERTY PUT IN ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON.’”

LUKE 21:1-4

Jesus watches the flow of people making their way to give money in the Jerusalem temple. Jesus watches, and He sees. Outward, human judgement values the volume of wealth; Jesus' value system is focused on the quality of the gift. Human observation looks at extravagance; Jesus sees where the actual value of a gift lies.

Giving is powerful—it reveals the depths of our hearts in God's presence. Giving exposes more of our hearts than we are comfortable with.

In giving, we give up what we might have had by saving or spending the money. Giving is powerful because it requires us to trust God for our future.

By giving, we know that God can take our gifts, large or small by human standards, and we trust that God knows the weight of our sacrifices, and we know He sees and takes joy in our faithful giving.

In giving, we are to model ourselves on the widow of Luke 21, not the wealthy: not seeking influence or praise, but trusting God to see and know.

As you examine your heart, will you allow the widow, not the wealthy, to be your example?

Next steps in your giving journey

“BE CAREFUL NOT TO PRACTICE YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN FRONT OF OTHERS TO BE SEEN BY THEM. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL HAVE NO REWARD FROM YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. SO WHEN YOU GIVE TO THE NEEDY, DO NOT ANNOUNCE IT WITH TRUMPETS, AS THE HYPOCRITES DO.”

MATTHEW 6:1-2

“**W**hen you give...” Jesus says **WHEN**, not **IF**, those who listen to His teaching give. He gives instructions on how to give: not seeking recognition but discretely and deliberately.

When giving is new to us (when new to the Christian life or returning to it; maybe we’ve stopped giving in the past and you’re beginning to give again now), there can be personal, external and internal barriers to overcome. Giving can feel impossible and overwhelming, but you **CAN** start from where you are now. The following pages focus on some of the nitty-gritty of how to begin giving.

Perhaps the Lord is challenging you to give more than you are currently: to follow a principle of tithing (giving 10%) of your income or to give an even greater percentage than that. Perhaps the widow’s generosity and surrender have you thrilled and excited, daunted and overawed.

Whatever God is doing in your heart, the call is to give what is possible for you to give in reality, not to give impossible numbers but to set out in faithful trust. God sees your heart, and His love for you is not swayed, increased or lessened because of the amount you give.

How are you feeling?

What are your thoughts about giving?

Plan to give

This exercise is to help you work out your commitment to giving. It's not for anyone else to see. Working on this with your husband/wife is best if you are married. It's a helpful tool to reassess as well as start your giving.

WHAT IS YOUR FORTNIGHTLY/MONTHLY/ANNUAL INCOME?

Start with the standard/usual pattern of your income. Write this down—it may depend on age and stage: pocket money, part-time jobs, wages/salary, and investment returns all count as your income. Some give from their gross income as they believe that is what Scripture requires; others consider the biblical injunction to pay tax as part of their obedience to God and give after tax. Pray about your convictions, and then make your decision.

WHAT PROPORTION OF YOUR GIVING IS YOUR AIM TO GIVE?

Tithing is a popular term (it means 10%) in the light of Old Testament law.⁸ Those 'tithes' add up to 30-40% of household wealth/income. There is no legalistic line to 'enforce': the New Testament encourages Christians to give generously, according to ability, though the 10% mark can be a helpful guideline. So, consider your income and ask what you CAN give, not what you can't. What is generous? 10% for someone earning \$50,000 a year in Auckland is a costly sacrifice, impacting everyday choices. The same may not be true of someone earning \$200,000; giving 10% may affect leisure choices but not daily necessities; those on higher incomes can choose to provide a greater percentage of their wealth.

WHAT ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO GIVE UP TO GIVE TO GOD?

It's helpful to see what is needed to re-order our finances so that we might put giving first. Will you have less to spend on leisure, or maybe choose to buy below the latest/ideal? Perhaps you will decide to forgo a monthly viewing subscription? Putting essentials on the line like mortgage/rent/heating is not something we encourage. If you're wrestling with how to do this, talk it through with a good friend, a connect group leader, an elder or one of the pastors at church. A CAP Money Course is an excellent thing to do (at any stage) as you assess/reassess your finances.

Each Christian's own church community should be the focus of their primary giving: giving to other agencies, missions, workers, and causes can be part of overflowing generosity. There's no 'legal line', but there are priorities in giving.

WHAT DOES EASTGATE EXPECT OR REQUIRE ME TO DO?

In short, there is no demand or pressure to give. There is a biblical command to give, and church partners commit to taking up their part in the responsibilities and privileges of church life. Still, there is no REQUIREMENT to provide financially to be a part of Eastgate. Pastors and elders are deliberately kept free of the knowledge of who is giving so that there is no hint of influence or pressure in the life of our church.

Giving in practice

HOW DO I GIVE TO CHURCH?

There are several ways to give to Eastgate.

- **Cash**—Place your gift in an envelope and post it into the giving box at the rear of the auditorium. Write your giving number or name on the envelope.*
- **EFTPOS**—the EFTPOS machine is at the i-Centre each Sunday. Follow the instruction sheet there, write your giving number or name on the back of the EFTPOS receipt and put it into the slot in the counter.*
- **Automatic payment or direct banking**—set up an AP from your bank account to the church bank account (02-0223-0113491-00) for regular and consistent giving. Write your giving number or name and purpose in the reference fields.*
- **Online giving**—give through our website eastgatecc.org.nz/give or scan the QR code to give conveniently.*



**Every gift of money or cash to Eastgate is eligible for inclusion on a tax certificate. Please note: As per IRD regulations, we cannot offer a tax certificate for goods or services.*

For any enquiries, please contact accounts@eastgatecc.org.nz.

GLOBAL MISSIONS/ FAITH PROMISE

We give for ministry at Eastgate and we also give to support God's global mission. We have a number of mission partners that we pray for, give to, and visit with mission teams. We encourage everyone to set aside a little extra and give consciously and prayerfully on the third Sunday of every month for the faith promise offering. A realistic figure could be the equivalent of one hour's work a month, or 1% of your monthly income, or skipping your favourite coffee/treat once a month and giving that. This is a core part of being known by and loved by God in Christ Jesus: loving His kingdom and sacrificing our extras so that those who don't yet know Him are given the opportunity to hear about Him and respond by faith.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

That is entirely between you and the Lord. It is helpful to determine what proportion of your income you wish to give and start from there. Beginning to give may mean reshaping how you choose to spend your money. The Lord sees any sacrifice you make, and we don't give to be loved; we give because we are loved. The amount we give is a matter of a free conscience; what we are giving is the response of obedience to God's love.

Attending a CAP Money Course can provide helpful guidance on managing your finances and help you think through the details. Sign up for a CAP Money Course in your area by going to capmoney.org.

Giving makes a real difference here

The ministries and outreach of Eastgate are provided for through the congregation's faithfulness. Our pastors, church staff, global mission partnerships, and ministries are all funded and supported through Eastgate's financial generosity.

Why each one of us gives is about worship, having God as our first priority. The elders and management team ensure that money given is used in acts of service and worship, fulfilling our vision of a church called by God to be a lighthouse church, where every person can experience transforming faith and be enabled to impact our world through local initiatives and international partnerships.

¹ Matthew 17:27

² John 6:5-12

³ John 2:1-11

⁴ Colossians 1:15-16

⁵ Acts 5:1-11. Annanias and Sapphira thought they could fool God's people and God Himself. But God sees things as they are—pretending doesn't fool God.

⁶ 2 Chronicles 31:4-5

⁷ 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

⁸ Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:21-26; Deuteronomy 14:22, 28-29; 2 Chronicles 31:5.