

## Telling your story

Share with each other in small groups the story of your working life.

- How old were you when you started work?
- What different jobs have you had?
- Which have you enjoyed the most?
- Have you had periods of being unemployed?
- Are you happy in what you are doing now?
- How has being a Christian made a difference at work?
- How has being a Christian changed your attitude to money?

## Christian vocation

In the Gospels Jesus calls people to follow him and to particular forms of service. Christians believe the risen Christ calls people to service today – the word ‘vocation’ means a call.

All Christians try to live out their faith in their workplace.

Some Christians fulfill their vocation and earn their living mainly through their daily work.

Some Christians earn their living through their daily work to support their calling to ministry in other ways (as Paul made tents to support himself).

Discovering your vocation at different periods of your life is an important part of being a disciple.

## First principles of Christian stewardship

All that we have comes from God. God calls us to be good stewards of all we have been given. God is concerned not simply with what we give but how we approach all we have. According to Genesis 1 and 2, our stewardship extends to caring for the whole world.

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power,  
and the glory, the splendour and the majesty;  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.  
Everything comes from you,  
and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

1 Chronicles 29.11 and 14

## Bible study

Each group should take one or two of the passages listed below. Read them together and draw out of them the main teaching on money and possessions.

Draw together into one group. Each group should present to the others what they have found in the passage.

- Luke 12.13-31
- Luke 20.20-27
- Luke 18.18-30
- Luke 21.1-3.
- Luke 19.11-27

## How should we give?

God has given so much to us and asks us to be as generous in return. The New Testament instruction is to give:

- in proportion to our income;
- in a regular and disciplined way;
- in a way that is realistic to the need;
- in secret;
- with joy.

God is more concerned about how we give than about how much.

## Tithing

The Old Testament standard of giving was the tithe – one tenth of our income. Many Christians still give in this way. For some, giving a tenth will be something to work towards. For others it will be just a beginning.

## Understanding your church's finances

Obtain some information about your church finances (from your treasurer or copies of last year's accounts).

Work out your answers to the following questions in small groups:

- What was your total church expenditure for last year?
- What does that work out at each week?
- What are the five largest items in the budget?
- How much did your church give away last year?
- What is the budget for this year?
- How much was income last year?
- How much does that work out at each week?
- What proportion of income comes from the giving of church members?
- How much tax was reclaimed from charitable covenants?

For discussion: How much do you think church members should be called upon to give?

## Steps into giving

These are some steps people make in their giving from when they first become Christians. Don't feel pressured. Pray about your giving and talk it over with your family. God is patient with us in this area (as in every other). If the rest of your family are not Christians that will clearly affect your own giving.

- Casual giving.
- Responsible giving.
- Proportional giving.

## Ways of giving

You can give in several different ways:

- Cash in the offertory
- Through an envelope system
- Through an automatic withdrawal from your bank account

If you pay income tax, the donations you give to the church for which you have a receipt are tax deductible.

## For reflection

Thank God for all you have been given. Pray this week about your own attitude to money and possessions and about how much you should give. Take some practical steps once you have prayed through your decision.