

LJCC's Guide to Generosity

GROW IN THE CORE BELIEF: "I believe everything I am or own belongs to God."

Is there any greater privilege entrusted to us by God than caring for his people and his world? The concept of Christian generosity is not "What do I have to give?" but rather "What good can I do with what God has given me?"

Generosity is an important dimension of core spiritual strength and growth. Most of us are more materialistic than we'd like to admit. For some people, their favorite three words are "It's all mine!"

But, Jesus said "You can't serve God and money." He also said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart is also." Jesus calls us from fear-based living ("What if I don't have enough money to live on?") to faith-based living ("I will give because I trust God and leave my future in his hands").

Our goal is to help everyone at LJCC be generous in God's name and full partners with God in his work. God always does great things through people who live for Him. We want to accomplish everything God has called us to do together. We ask our members to trust God and ask him how they should give. God makes a difference *in* us. Together we make a difference *for* him!

What Does the Bible Tell Us About Giving?

Scripture teaches us to give in eight ways:

Gratefully

Because God is the source and ultimate owner of all we have. We are so grateful for his provision that we give as a way of saying "Thank you!" We believe it's a gift and a privilege to give! (*2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Proverbs 3:9-10*)

Sacrificially

We understand that Christ gave himself for us, and so we joyfully present all we are, and all we have, as a "living sacrifice" to God. (*Rom. 12:1-2, 8; 2 Cor. 8:1-9*)

Proportionately

We recognize that 100% of what we earn and have is a gift from God. We use the Biblical tithe (10% of our income) as a benchmark. We don't live by legalism, but by grace. (*Genesis 14:18-20; Leviticus 27:30,32; Malachi 3:8-10, Luke 14:33, 2 Cor. 8:13 - 15*)

Regularly

We offer the "first-fruits" back to God. We don't just give on occasional impulse, but in a disciplined strategic way. We give out of a compelling vision, not just occasional emotions. (*1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Proverbs 3:9-10*)

Locally

Knowing that we claim this church as our spiritual home, we support the church staff and programs from which we derive benefit. (*1 Timothy 5:17-18, 1 Corinthians 9:13-14*)

Generously

We contribute to and participate in the cause of Christ locally and globally with everything God has entrusted to us. We are inspired by the call of Christ and the magnitude of the need. (*2 Corinthians 9:6-11*)

Cheerfully

We give to God by giving to people, organizations, and movements that serve him. We give willingly, not under compulsion. We give with a spirit of joyful worship as our resources flow out to serve others. We see it as a blessing not a burden. It's a "get-to do" not a "have-to do." (*2 Corinthians 9:5-7*)

Expectantly

Counting on God's promise of provision, we anticipate seeing God work in our own lives—including financially—as we give. We see giving as a gain not loss; a sound investment in God's kingdom. (*Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6-14, Malachi 3:8-10*)

The next step

Followers of Jesus align themselves with God's principles for living and giving. If LJCC is your church home, we ask you to commit to giving a regular percentage of your anticipated income. Stating your financial commitment to us in writing will help us know your prayerful intention, help us plan and allow us to have confidence in our plans. If you choose not to do make a commitment at this time, we understand honor your decision.

Grow in your giving; don't groan in your giving!

Giving is a habit of the heart that we must learn. For some of you, the biblical concept of tithing 10% of your income is new. If you feel unable or not ready to give at that level, we encourage you to start at a level you feel good about (perhaps 3% or 5% or 7%) and then increase it as you gain confidence in God's provision for you. Structure your giving!

Why do we take an offering anyway?

Because we believe that giving is part of Christian worship and discipleship. Many of you send checks or stock, or have money automatically transferred from your bank account each month so your giving bypasses the offering. Either way you are fulfilling your spiritual commitment to God in giving. The offering reminds us that worship always calls for a response.

LJCC is committed to financial integrity

You can be assured of our commitment to handling your gifts wisely. Our finances are handled according to the highest professional standards. Our Board and staff carefully manage our budget.

So, why is all this so important?

When it comes to the Church and money, it takes money to keep a church going and growing; there's no mystery in that. The question is how we use our money in ways that honor God and bless people.

It's like Jesus saying to his disciples in the garden: "Stay awake with me." God is calling us to wake up and be alert about how we can reach the world. The Lord calls us to be his partners in the world. Lives depend on us. Therefore, we want to offer to God our very best. We do this because love compels us! We are loved and we love: We love God and we love people. Love is our measure, not money. Money simply points to what we love and can accomplish in the name of love.

Jesus calls us into an abundant life overflowing with God's goodness. We are receiving an inheritance that allows us to be fruitful and faithful. When you 'get' that, you see your life, and live your life, in a whole new way. Jesus moves us from being part of the problem to being the solution. The Church is God's plan for people reaching people!

Can God count on you to bring your best before him and lay it at his feet?

We believe he can.

Can we count on each other to do that as children of God?

Yes we can.

Thank you again for your faithfulness and generosity. With your continued support, we can do great things together to further God's kingdom in the years ahead.