

GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Help the group members:

1. to understand that giving in the New Testament is different than giving in the Old Testament because the law has changed (Hebrews 7:12)
2. to begin to give as the New Testament teaches: generously and cheerfully and not reluctantly or under compulsion

I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

1. Prayer

Pray that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

2. Meditation

Worship is to thank God.

Theme: To thank God for his indescribable gift!

Read the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

2 Corinthians 8:9

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 9:15

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

- In which way did Jesus Christ become poor for our sakes?
- In which way did we become rich through his poverty?

3. Worship

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to worship (in one or two sentences) God for the indescribable gift he has given to us.

II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

The theme for this meeting is: Giving in the New Testament

Read or explain in your own words.

Although Christians may give one tenth of their income to Jesus Christ and his kingdom, the Bible does NOT teach that Christians must give tithes!

The law about the giving of tithes was a part of the ceremonial law in the Old Testament, just like the other laws about the tabernacle and temple, the priests and Levites, the Sabbath, the festivals and the fasting, the physical circumcision, the eating of clean foods, the ablutions (ceremonial washings), the bringing of animal sacrifices and the bringing of the firstborn and the first fruit of the harvest were part of the Old Testament ceremonial law. Through his death on the cross during his first coming Jesus Christ fulfilled (Matthew 5:17) the Old Testament ceremonial laws and consequently cancelled (Colossians 2:14) and abrogated (Ephesians 2:14-15) them!

Christians do not have a temple in Jerusalem; they do not have priests and Levites who bring animal sacrifices; they do not celebrate the Jewish festivals and fasting day; they are not physically circumcised; they do not set aside their firstborn and first fruits of the harvest for the temple services; they do not have to eat only ceremonial clean foods and they do not have to obey all kinds of ceremonial washings. Likewise Christians do not have to bring a tenth (even two tenths) of their income to support the religious services in the temple of Jerusalem!

The Bible study from 2 Corinthians 8:1 to 9:15 teach how Christians ought to give during the New Testament period.

III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.

Theme: Biblical reasons to give

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| Day 1 | Matthew 6:1-4,19-21
Give inconspicuously, but where it counts |
| Day 2 | Matthew 10:8; 25:35-40
Give to insignificant brothers |
| Day 3 | 2 Corinthians 8:1-9
The New Testament way of giving is not a fixed amount, but according to ability |
| Day 4 ^{BS} | 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
The New Testament way of giving is without compulsion |
| Day 5 | Luke 12:41-48
Give at the right time to people God entrusted |

- to you what they really need in spiritual and material respect
- Day 6 Luke 16:1-9
Use what you have to make friends for eternity
- Day 7 Proverbs 19:17; 21:13; Matthew 5:42; 7:6
Give to the poor, but not to 'the dogs'
- Day 8 1 John 3:16-22
Give, because giving is loving with deeds instead of words
- Day 9 1 Corinthians 16:1-3
Give by regularly setting aside a sum of money
- Day 10 Acts 20:32-35
Give by working hard

IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.
If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

1. Discussing the study

Discuss the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

Theme: Giving

- What does the Old Testament teach about tithes?
- What does the New Testament teach about the ceremonial laws in the Old Testament?
- What does the New Testament teach about giving?

2. Commitment

Let the group members consider the following question and record their answer:

- "How are you currently giving and how would you like to give differently?"

3. Personal sharing

Discuss personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

1. Review of previous Bible verses

Let pairs of group members review each other's previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

Explain the meaning of the new Bible verse.

GIVING 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Remember this:

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Each man should give

what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion,

for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NIV)

VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

Theme: Whoever sows generously will also reap generously

1. Bible Study

Make use of the 5 step method and study:

2 Corinthians 9:1-15.

Read also 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

¹ There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. ² For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³ But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. ⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

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."

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and

will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service 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. ¹³ 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 with everyone else. ¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2. Emphasis

- The ceremonial laws in the Old Testament are only shadows or illustrations of the realities that came with the first coming of Jesus Christ. Christians may not take a step backwards to the 'shadows' of the Old Testament. They must live with 'the realities' of the New Testament!
- The ceremonial laws have been fulfilled (Matthew 5:17), cancelled (Colossians 2:14) and abrogated (Ephesians 2:15). They may not be re-introduced into the Christian Church.
- What the Old Testament taught about tithing in Israel has been replaced by what the New Testament teaches about giving of Christians. Christians should never return to the Law (Galatians 3:2-3). If they do, they are in danger of falling away from grace (Galatians 3:10-11; 5:4).

3. Explanation for the group leader

See the study.

VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

Pray with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

Pray with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

Hand out the preparation for the next gathering.