**

*The Generous Life: Message 3*

***Sermon Outline:*** *Enabling Ministry*

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| **Topic:** | Giving |
| **Main Point:** | Giving Enables Ministry |
| **Intended Response:** | Give of our time, abilities and finances. |

**Introduction**

Without the generosity of many people, we would not be able to hold Sunday services, have a permanent presence in this community, have a place to gather for prayer and fellowship, or provide weekly programs.

So how should we live in light of people’s generosity? How should we live in light of God’s generosity towards us? How does giving enable ministry?

1. Examples of giving in the Old and New Testament

* Tithing enabled ministry to happen in the Old Testament
* Without tithing, ministry in the Old Testament was limited
* The New Testament church practiced giving

**Point One:** Giving enables ministry to happen.

1. The gift of giving

* We are all called to give
* Some people have a God given capacity to generate more finances
* Giving is an essential step in our discipleship

**Point Two:** We all have a part to play in giving and enabling ministry to occur

1. Using our time and abilities

* It takes all types of resources to reveal God’s kingdom
* We can give our time
* We can give our abilities

**Point Three:** When we give of ourselves and use the resources and gifts God has given us, we enable ministry to flourish.

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| **Teaching Illustrations and props:**  This sermon uses the cover story of Others Magazine, March 2017, issue 02, *Much more than Just Brass.* For more Just Brass stories visit: <http://others.org.au/features/so-much-more-than-just-brass>  and <http://others.org.au/features/just-brass-hits-the-right-note>  Pictures related to both sermon stories are already included in the PowerPoint slides.  ***More*** *resources for this sermon, including PowerPoint slides are available at* [www.SArmy.org.au](http://www.SArmy.org.au) |

*The Generous Life: Message 3*

***Sermon:*** *Enabling Ministry*

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| **Introduction:** | Good morning and welcome to our Sunday Service everybody.  Take a moment to look around and notice what is in this building. What are a few things you see (feel free to call out) …  *Chairs, carpet, musical instruments, seats, flags, screens…*  There’s a lot around us. And what we are seeing is here because of your generosity and the generosity of others.  Everything we have here today, the ministry we enjoy is only possible because people opened their heart to God and gave.  What we are enjoying today is because of a collective effort of generosity.  Without the generosity of people here today and of people who have gone before us, we would not be able to hold Sunday services, have a permanent presence in this community, have a place to gather for prayer and fellowship, to share meals with one another, provide weekly programs… *(List the activities and programs of your corps and how they benefit the local community / proclaim the gospel).*  We are able to worship here because many people gave. All of this and the ministry that happens here is because people give. Because you give – and before we move on I’d just like to say thank you – thank you for your generous heart and for showing the love of God in a practical way through your giving.  So how we live in light of God’s generosity towards us?  Today, I’d like to open up this idea more and speak on how giving enables ministry. |
| **Transition** | We read in Philippians 2:3-4,  *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind* ***regard one another*** *as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for* ***the interests of others****.*  The idea here is about placing the needs of others in front of our own. It’s about giving up our privileges for the benefit of others. It’s about living a life of generosity so others may benefit. It’s about living with an open heart and open hands to help others.  To me, one of the most practical ways of doing this is sharing what we have with others, and giving our time, talents, and treasure freely. |
| **#1 Giving Examples** | There are many examples in the Bible of people who gave to the work of God and enabled people to be helped and ministered to. There are many examples in the Old and New Testament of how giving enables ministry to happen.  *Old Testament examples…*  We are introduced to this concept of giving in order for ministry to happen in the Old Testament. It is called tithing. The word tithe means “10 percent”.  *Tithing enables ministry to happen…*  ***Numbers 18:21***  *I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance, in return* ***for the work they do while serving*** *at the tent of meeting.*  ***2 Chronicles 31:4-5***  *He* ***ordered*** *the people living in Jerusalem* ***to give*** *the portion due the priests and Levites* ***so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD****…They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.*  The Levites were people who did not have jobs but worked full time ministering in God’s temple.  *Without tithing, ministry was negatively impacted…*  ***Nehemiah 10:35-37***  *“We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year, the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree… And we will bring a* ***tithe*** *of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work.*  When Nehemiah was getting Israel focused on repopulating Jerusalem, he needed people to give in order that the temple ministry could continue. Without people tithing, there were no priests to carry out the work of the Lord in the temple.  ***Haggai 1:2-4***  *This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’ ”Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this* ***house remains a ruin****?”*  Without tithing in the Old Testament, the sacrifice demands God required of Israel would not happen, the priests would have no food to eat, the physical building would fall into ruin, and the spiritual environment of Israel would suffer.  In the Old Testament, tithing enabled ministry to happen, what about in the New Testament?  *New Testament examples…*  In the New Testament, ministry is supported by people giving generously. This can be done through tithing, offerings, people donating their time or abilities to help others.  We see repeated examples of people giving in the New Testament to enable ministry to happen.  Jesus was able to minister freely through the support of others.  ***Luke 8:1-3***  *After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women … and many others. These women were helping to* ***support*** *them out of their* ***own means****.*  This is incredible. Here is Jesus, the Son of God, who owns the whole universe and can turn water into wine, multiple loaves and fishes, whose father can rain down manna from heaven – yet His ministry was enabled by people who gave.  We knew Jesus worked – He was a carpenter, but when it came time to devote Himself exclusively to preaching, this was only possible by the generous giving of others. And when we give, we enable the ministry of Christ to continue through others.  Just as Jesus needed supporting in ministry, so does our ministry and mission.  *The church practiced giving…*  The early church had a practice of giving to further the gospel.  ***Acts 2:44-45***  *All the believers were together and had everything in common.* ***They sold*** *property and possessions* ***to give*** *to anyone who had need.*  ***Acts 18:2-5***  *Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and* ***worked with them****…When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia,* ***Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching****, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.*  ***Philippians 4:15-16***  *..when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving,* ***except you*** *only; for even when I was in Thessalonica,* ***you sent me aid*** *more than once when I was in need.*  Churches gave in order for missionary work to occur. I am reminded of a saying I once heard, “*The gospel is free, but it takes money to send it*”. |
| **Point 1.** | Giving enables ministry to happen. |
| **Transition** | God knows that for ministry to happen it takes resources: time, money, abilities, people with open hearts who want to help others and see the gospel flourish. And, for that reason, He gave gifts to the church, to people, like you and I… |
| **#2 The Gift of Giving** | I’m thankful we are a church who live for others, more than ourselves.  We’ve seen amazing testimonies over the years of people giving generously and God moving powerfully, providing for our needs. God is always faithful - Amen.  So if God is all powerful, does He really need us to give? The answer is yes, because He uses natural ways (as well as supernatural ways) to build His church and get the gospel out there to everyone in need.  We are all called to give.  **2 Cor 8:7**  But since you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you --see that you also **excel in this grace of giving**.  **Acts 20:35**  We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: **'It is more blessed to give than to receive**’.  **Matt 10:8**  Freely you have received; **freely give**.  You can tell here that it is God’s heart that we all excel in living a generous life – helping others for the sake of the gospel, so again – yes, we are all called to give.  However, God also provides for ministry is by equipping certain people with the gift of giving. Some people have a God given capacity to generate more finances than others. Not only that, they have an amazing grace on their lives to give away a lot of finances.  The Bible speaks of this in…  **Rom 12:6-8 NLT**  In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you…**If it is giving, give generously**.  There may be those among us with a spiritual gift of giving. You are good with money. You are able to manage it well. You are able to generate it easily. You feel empowered to give and love giving financially into ministries – there is an ease, a grace on your life to do so. You may even have access to other people’s wealth and your job is to help them donate it.  Let me encourage you, God has given you this gift to help others, to testify of the gospel, to resource churches and other ministries. I pray you steward it well and increase your capacity to earn wealth and give to causes that honour God, because the gift of giving enables ministry.  *Insert Story: share a story of a gift to the Corps or to a program your corps runs that enabled people to be ministered to, or share a personal testimony of being blessed by a gift.*  *For example: I was in a church meeting once with my Father-in-law, and the preacher was talking about giving to mission work. He said, “And if you can’t go, you can send”. At that time I was considering going to Bible College. My wife and I were unsure but my father-in-law handed us a cheque and said, “I may not be able to go but I can send you – go and enrol”. So I did, and as a result, I’ve been in ministry for over 13 years now.*  That’s what giving can do – it can unlock someone’s destiny and give them a nudge in the right direction. Who can you send?  To live in Australia is a great blessing in and of itself. If you earn more than two dollars a day, you are better off than half of the world’s population. We need to honour God with our wealth,  **1 Tim 6:17-19 MSG**  **Tell those rich** in this **world’s wealth** to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to **be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous**. If they do that, they’ll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.  Think of the children who have a future now because someone adopted them as a sponsor child, and every month, year after year – helped provide the food, clothing and education they needed to flourish in life.  We have been given so much, we should give what we can to help others. |
| **Point 2.** | We all have a part to play in giving and enabling ministry to occur. |
| **Transition** | But God also knows that it takes all types of resources to reveal His kingdom here on earth. It’s not all about finances, money cannot fix everything. And many times, money is not what’s needed. There are many ways we can enable ministry… |
| **#3 Using our time and abilities** | There are different types of gifts that enable ministry, such as giving our time or using our abilities to help others.  *Insert story (bring up PowerPoint pictures):*  *I saw this post from on the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Facebook page:*   * *The actual application asylum seekers have to complete by October 1. 41 pages, 116 questions and only in English. You also have to attach a detailed statement of every experience of torture, rape, war and trauma they've experienced, again only in English. Can't read or write English? Bad luck. No interpreters or translation will be provided to you. It's not just a form, it's what will possibly decide whether you live or die. We've almost 1,000 people right now whose applications our lawyers need to complete by October 1. Help us KeepThemSafe with housing, food and mental health support while our lawyers fight to protect their human rights.*   *Here’s the first reply…*   * *My wife and I have 8 years of university studies between us and over 50 years of classroom teaching. When we tried to help one of our friends, seeking refugee status, fill in the forms, we were gobsmacked at how difficult the legalistic jargon was. He ended up having to pay thousands of dollars to hire a lawyer to fill it in –shame!*   *Here’s another reply…*   * *I'm a law student in Brisbane and would love to put together a team of legal people to help anyone who needs it. Who could I get into contact with to organise such a thing?*   Isn’t that second response wonderful – a student studying law willing to help others; they are giving the gift of their time.  What would it be like if we all were using our time to worship God by helping others? Wouldn’t it be great to see a ministry dream God has placed in your heart come alive? Or help someone struggling to make a new life in this country? Or to help our pastoral team to visit people who are sick, so one or two people don’t carry all the load by themselves?  Here are a few ways you can invest your time in ministry:   * Volunteer in a ministry. Go and visit people. Bake cakes for fellowship. Make breakfast for kids at school. * Some people invest their time waiting on tables and feeding the poor. * Spend time in prayer, praying for the church and interceding for others. * Visit people and share the love of Jesus with them. * Just being there with people is a powerful thing.   Please feel free to talk to us about getting involved in a ministry here at church.  And let me invite you, if you are new here or have been attending for a little while and wondering if you can get involved, the answer is: yes! We’d love to see you released into your calling and using your gifts for God. Serving God is more enjoyable when more people are involved.  The other thing we can give is our abilities. I am a firm believer that we are all given gifts from God that are there to help us enjoy life and build God’s kingdom.  Let me finish today by sharing a testimony from our Others magazine (which you can read online) on one of The Salvation Army’s music ministries, Just Brass.  (PowerPoint pictures)   * *David, the corps officer at South Barwon in Geelong, and John his brother, were just reaching out to the local community with the skills they had – playing brass instruments. They had no large-scale vision, they just wanted to outreach. “At the time, the corps senior band had 15 members and we had another 18 instruments in the cupboard,” John remembers. “My wife, a social worker, had started working at Whittington Public School and I was doing some voluntary music teaching there and realised there was a need.”* * *The brothers turned to what they knew – brass music. “David had been a music teacher before he was an officer and I had grown up playing brass, so we knew the systems needed to set up a program.”* * *When 35 kids and parents turned up to the information meeting, the brothers knew they were on to something – and they were going to need more instruments!* * *Five years later, the Just Brass program has spread to 12 corps working with local schools in four Australian states and a New Zealand corps, and has begun to gather interest in other overseas locations. John has another 20 corps across Australia who have expressed interest in making Just Brass a part of their outreach. He has even more schools.*   Can you imagine that? Two brothers, with a simple idea, who used their gifts to serve God by serving in their community. They invested their time into God’s work and now a ministry is flourishing around Australia, reaching out to disadvantaged school kids and connecting them to faith communities.  What would be happening right now to these kids if David and his brother did nothing? They would miss out. Who is missing out on being ministered to if you don’t give of yourself?  There are many different types of gifts God gives us:   * Creativity Gen 2:19 * Craft Exo 35:30-33 * Administration Exo 18:13-26 * Leadership Num 27:18-20, Rom 12:8 * Prophecy 1 Sam 3:19-21, Rom 12:7 * Serving Rom 12:7 * Teaching Rom 12:7 * Giving Rom 12:8 * Spiritual 1 Cor 12:7-10 * Ministry Eph 4:11-12 * Preaching 1 Pet 4:11 * Wisdom Jam 1:5 * And many more.   When we give our time, our abilities, our finances, we enable the gospel to reach more people, to minister to those in need and we honour God in the process. |
| **Point 3:** | When we give of ourselves and use the resources and gifts God has given us, we enable ministry to flourish. |
| **Conclusion** | Just think how great it will be when we use our time, gifts and money for God’s purposes. When everyone is involved, helping ministry happen, living out our dreams, doing what God has called us too, it’s a great testimony!  More ministers on the field, more finances for outreach, greater impact on our local community. Imagine for a second the lives that could be changed: the refugee family who were able to settle, the hungry school child who was fed by a morning school program, the family who came to faith in Christ because someone took the time to visit them in their time of need.  I’m excited to be part of a church where we give generously, where we are on fire for God, where new and innovative ideas are being tried, people coming to Christ, people thriving in the place God has called them to.  And this can happen when we all decide to enable ministry together. And that’s our challenge here today – for you, for me, for us.  Let’s use our resources to enable more and more ministry to take place so more and more people can encounter the love of God and meet Jesus.  Would you pray with me… |
| **Prayer** | Father, thank you for the wonderful gifts you have given our church. Help us be more generous with what you have given us. We pray you would help us live intentionally and make the most of the time we have for you and your kingdom.  Reveal to us what spiritual gifts you have given us so we may use them and impact our world for Jesus. Stir up our faith so we may give to your work and see your kingdom expand, as others are saved and ministered to. Help us to give our finances generously as a regular part of our devotional life to you.  We ask this in Jesus name – Amen. |

*The Generous Life: Message 3*

***Scriptures:*** *Enabling Ministry*

**Phil 2:3-4**

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

**Lev 27:30-34**

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.

**Num 18:21**

I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting.

**2 Chro 31:4-5**

He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.

**Neh 10:35-37**

We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. “As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there. “Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work.

**Hag 1:2-4**

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’ ”Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

**Luke 8:1-3**

After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women … and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

**Acts 2:44-45**

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

**Acts 18:2-5**

Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them…When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.

**Phil 4:15-16**

Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

**2 Cor 8:7**

But since you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

**Acts 20:35**

We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive’.

**Matt 10:8**

Freely you have received; freely give.

**Rom 12:6-8 NLT**

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you…If it is giving, give generously.

**1 Tim 6:17-19 MSG**

Tell those rich in this world’s wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they’ll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.

**Further Study…**

Gen 2:19, Exo 35:30-33, Exo 18:13-26, Num 27:18-20, Rom 12:81, Sam 3:19-21, Rom 12:7, Rom 12:7, Rom 12:81, Cor 12:7-10, Eph 4:11-12, 1 Pet 4:11, Jam 1:5.