

Giving Study Sheet

Aim: A series of sheets to prompt group discussion around giving. This discussion may primarily lead to individual action. It should not lead necessarily to action within the group. The discussion may lead to different ways of doing things in the life of the church.

Text: Luke 8: 3 (CEV)

^{3(a)}Joanna, Susanna, and many others had also used what they owned to help Jesus and his disciples. (Contemporary English Version)

³Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. (English Standard Version)

Reflection

The explanation in the Contemporary English Bible is that women often helped Jewish teachers by giving them money. Certainly it is apparent that Jesus was welcomed into homes and that women went ahead to prepare a place for him to stay.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joseph were two of these women (Mark 15:41b). As was Mary of Jerusalem, mother of John Mark. Her house was the official meeting place for the earliest band of believers after the resurrection. And as Barnabas' sister she was related to one of the leaders of the church in Antioch (Acts 12:12 and 13:1).

In the early church Priscilla, wife of Aquila is also noteworthy. Paul stayed with them in Corinth (Acts 18:1). They accompanied him to Ephesus and he later wrote saying, "Greet the church that meets in their home." (Romans 16:3-5)

So there are a series of women who gave to Jesus and the early church. Money, time, their homes. They gave in ways we would find hard to imagine. Let us explore what we might learn from their instrumental ministry to Jesus and the early church.

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Discussion Points

These are suggestions – address as many or as few as your group wishes to do. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Your church is home to your Christian community. Is your church home to your local community as well?
- How could you improve hospitality to visitors to your church?
- Every home has running costs. Do you know how much is needed to keep the church in good running order on a monthly basis? What other costs does the church incur, for instance for coffee fellowship? Would knowing this help you to understand the significance of your gifts to the church?
- Use your imagination to picture how the women might have used what they owned to help Jesus.
- Can you think of examples from the Bible of others using what they owned to help Jesus? How could you use what you own to help Jesus?

Concluding thought

As Christians we are stewards for the next generation. Our church and community has stood for many, many years. It is our responsibility to keep it safe and viable for our children's children and beyond.

Prayer

Help me to be a good steward, using my gifts, time and talents for the benefit of my church community now and for the next generation.

Music

Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost
Praise to the Lord (Graham Kendrick)

Giving and Funding Team
Diocese of Bath & Wells