

# Giving @ Mountainview

I sometimes get asked what Mountainview's position on giving is! Well it's generally standing, with an open wallet in hand, and your fingers about to grasp a crisp Euro note, or seated (better kneeling) in front of the computer, initiating a bank transfer into the Mountainview account. A light hearted introduction!

We desire that the Mountainview community learn to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7) and sacrificially, as a sincere act of worship (2 Samuel 24:18-25). When we give we recognize that God is the one who has first given everything to us and that our dependence is ultimately on Him (Deuteronomy 8, 1 Chronicles 29:14).

Mountainview believes that giving is fore mostly a matter of the heart, a loving response to Christ who has given us everything, even His very life on the cross (2 Corinthians 8:9). We shy away from coercing people to give and focus on a richer understanding of the incredible, loving generosity of God as our motivation to give.

That said, the bible is very candid about the subject of money and giving: Jesus warns on numerous occasions that wealth is a serious stumbling block to accepting the Gospel (Luke 18:25). Money can stunt our growth as a Christ-follower (Matthew 6:24). Discipleship involves releasing our grip on all we have (Luke 14:33). Everything we have belongs to God and we are His stewards (Luke 16:12).

Jesus would say that the question for a Christian's is not how much do we give, but how much does God allow us to keep!

Following Christ's commission that we make disciples and, "teach them to obey everything [he has] commanded" (Matthew 28: 20) we endeavour to accurately and unashamedly present the full biblical message on giving.

Giving is one of the areas that Christ's disciples are called to excel in (2 Corinthians 8: 7). The following is a brief summary of biblical teaching on *excellent* giving:

## 1. Giving 10% is a good starting point for our giving

In the Old Testament (OT) we are taught that the first 10% (a tithe) of everything we have belongs to the Lord (Exodus 13:12-13 & 23:19; Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9). Giving starts after the 10% is given (Malachi 3: 6-12).

In the New Testament (NT) the OT laws about tithing are set aside (although the Apostle Paul alludes to tithing when he says we should give to the church *in proportion* to our income (1 Corinthians 16:2)). However, in reality a much higher standard is called for by the Gospel! If those with an incomplete knowledge of grace were commanded to give a tithe how much more should we, who know more fully the grace of our Lord (the God who gave everything for our salvation) be motivated to give! Robert Morris in his book, *The Blessed Life*, calls us to remember that, "The righteousness of grace always exceeds the righteousness of the law."

Many of us at Mountainview are privileged to live near the very top of the world's economic tree. We believe God calls us to live more simply so we can give more generously towards His kingdom work & eradicating poverty in our world (2 Corinthians. 8: 1-3). We believe most of us could give considerably more than 10% and still be very comfortably off.

**Mountainview** practices what it preaches. Over 20% of our budget is allocated to local and regional mission and caring for the poor.

## 2. Giving sustains the local church

In the OT we discover that the tithe was essential to maintaining the spiritual life of the nation (Nehemiah 10: 35-40). In the same way our giving sustains the spiritual life of the local church. The NT teaches that giving supports those called by Christ to work for the Gospel (I Timothy 5: 17-18) and provides funds for mission, including the starting other churches (Romans 15:24).

If you attend Mountainview during your tenure in Spain, we believe it appropriate to view Mountainview as the local body of Christ to which He has called you to belong and to be giving accordingly.

Mountainview is developing into a missional hub for Madrid and Iberia. We would invite you to consider adopting Mountainview as a "mission project" and continuing to give on a longer-term towards our broader Iberian vision

### 3. Giving helps support the poor and needy

The bible has many references to caring for the poor and the needy. Poverty and injustice are issues that God cares deeply about and his followers must be profoundly concerned about them too. The early church gave to those in need (Acts 2:45). Paul reminds the Ephesian leader's that in keeping with Christ's command, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" he set them the example of giving to the weak and the poor (Acts 20:35). Perhaps the most challenging words comes from Christ himself who suggests that our response to the poor and needy is a strong indicator of the depth of our relationship with Him (Matthew 25: 31-46)

**Mountainview** partners in Proyecto Bernabé a local project that is helping provide basic foodstuffs, second hand clothing and other advice to over 120 needy families in our area. In addition we raise funds through garage/yard sales to help orphans and unwed mother's in N. Africa

#### 4. Giving is a significant measure of maturity

Luther said that the last thing to be converted was a man's wallet. We believe that generously providing funds to God's work is good indicator that the Gospel is taking root in our lives and that we are maturing as Christ's disciples. Giving plays a significant part in preparing us for eternity and readies us to meet face-to-face with Christ. If we have not handled earthly wealth wisely then God will not entrust us with eternal wealth (Luke 16: 10-12).

#### 5. Giving is key to savouring God's blessings

Giving is an important means to experiencing God's blessings (in all their variety). Jesus says that our measure of giving determines the measure of blessing (Luke 6:38). Paul says that if we sow generously we will reap generously and the blessings that result we will have further opportunities to be a blessing to others and a source of thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9: 6-15). Cornelius was blessed with being among the first Gentiles to hear the Gospel message, partly because he cared for the poor (Acts 10:2)

Jesus says that where our treasure is there is our heart also (Matthew 6: 21). Giving reminds us that our home in heaven and our life is a journey towards a heavenly city (Hebrews 11: 10).

*It is giving (not accumulated resources) that ultimately satisfies us through life and sustains through death*

Please look at the file, **Giving to Mountainview**, for details how tax deductible donations can be made to Mountainview in Spain, the US, the UK & Holland.