

First Church of Squantum

Generosity has been referred to as the “sleeping giant” of disciple-making. There is very little in our lives we do where a financial decision is not made. Do we buy a used car instead of a new car; gas station coffee or Starbucks; designer jeans or Levi’s? Most believers, if honest, will admit that they flirt on a regular basis with the ‘god’ of money.

Jesus spoke frequently about our use and attitude about possessions, and to whom those possessions ultimately belong. In God’s eyes our growth in generosity is less about a financial transaction and more about a transformation. Generosity is a matter of the heart!

And generosity involves sacrifice. King David declared, “I will not sacrifice to God that which costs me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). David understood the value of the gift presented to God, is determined by its value to the giver. The gift that would touch the heart of God must first touch the life of the giver.

Many Christians have been amazed at the extra giving they have been able to contribute when they engage in creative thinking and planning.

Here are some examples of God honoring ways to creatively and wisely support “Impact Squantum”.

Priority Budgeting

Many families will choose to rearrange their priorities and give up something in their current budget in order to give more to a Generosity Initiative such as the remodeling of our Fellowship Hall or the addition of a handicap ramp in the church.

For many of us this could mean postponing an upcoming expenditure such as a newer car, a vacation, or a home remodeling. For some reaching our generosity goal may be as simple as choosing to dine out less or reducing our online purchases of discretionary items.

could make an impact

Other families have significant expenditures for short-term needs, for example the cost of sending a child to college or paying for a new roof. These expenditures can make the thought of reaching their generosity goal seem daunting. One family realized that once their daughter graduated from college, or the roof was replaced on their home, they were now able to increase their commitment in years two of the Generosity Initiative.

Another common occurrence is giving the cash freed up once a loan is paid, like the monthly payment of a car note or home equity loan. These monthly expenses were already within the family budget, making the transfer of those dollars to the generosity goal easier to manage for your family.

Creative Giving

One woman, unsure how to support her Generosity Initiative, found an old painting that had been given to her by an aunt that had been stored in her garage for years.

She knew it was beautiful and had been in her family for some time, however it was not being displayed, she thought it could be better used to help her reach her generosity goal.

She took it to an auction house and was flabbergasted when it sold for \$103,000. Her pastor asked her whether she was going to tithe the proceeds, but she gave the full amount instead, saying “This is like I found money ...money that I don’t need for my lifestyle.” Her kind gesture provided her the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on her church and to avoid what would have been a significant tax liability if the painting was sold for personal profit and not given to a charitable cause.

In another case, a retired gentleman living solely on his pension was unsure on how he could support his church's campaign. While he didn't have cash or assets, he did have time as well as a car. He decided to offer airport transportation to church members. Over a three year period he was able to earn \$30,000, and contributed all of it to the Generosity Initiative.

Unexpected Cash

Often, people pray to God to show them a way to give beyond what they can presently see or afford. Sometimes the answers come unexpectedly.

One couple in Massachusetts had been praying for weeks about their commitment, and much to their surprise received an unexpected inheritance of several thousands of dollars. They were able to add this to their commitment from their regular income. Still others who have received salary increases or bonuses have decided to commit those unexpected blessings to the Generosity Initiative.

Retirement Accounts

Folks who have reached the age of 70-1/2 are required to take minimum distributions each year from their IRA's and 401k accounts (FYI-401ks are not required if still working unless more than 5% owner of the business), which are taxed at ordinary income rates. A recent and permanent change in the federal tax law allows retirees to transfer funds directly from their IRA/401k to a charity (up to 100k maximum), in this case **"Impact Squantum"** Generosity Initiative, without incurring tax. The qualified charitable deduction counts as part of the required minimum distribution each year fulfilling your annual obligation.

Appreciated Assets

Many folks own assets that have achieved unrealized gains in values over the years. Such as real estate and stocks or mutual funds. Others may have an inherited a valuable asset that has appreciated over time. The inherited painting sold at the auction in our earlier example is a terrific example of such a situation.

The good news is the fact that they have appreciated, but once they are sold, capital gains taxes are incurred on the gain. Gifts of appreciated assets sent directly to **"Impact Squantum"** can be

adventurous both to the donor and the church. Unlike gifts of cash that have already incurred income tax, gifts of appreciated assets avoid application of capital gains taxes, and the donor receives a charitable deduction at the full market value of the asset. (FYI-max 30% or 50% of AGI in one year depending on if gift is cash or capital asset). This Generosity Initiative can work directly with your financial institution to facilitate the transfer of those assets however be sure to consult with your CPA, or financial advisor before making a commitment of this type.

Our initiative is also making Certified Financial Planner, Henry Wheelwright at no cost available for private planning counsel to assist you with your giving needs

Planning Your Giving

Giving does not need to be in equal increments over the life of the Generosity Initiative. You might be able to give more in the first year than the other two years, or vice versa. As you think about your financial commitment to **"Impact Squantum"**, think not just of your potential to give right now, but also of your potential to give in the future.

A Final Word

Finally, as you consider your financial commitment to the Lord and His work, think about estate planning. Many sincere, committed Christians have not made provision for God in their wills and estate planning. Now might be a good time to do that. Currently the Federal Government and the State of Massachusetts have an inheritance tax that will be reduced by outlining your charitable goals in your estate plan.

It could be as simple as including a provision in your will or Revocable Trust that a percentage of the value of your estate be donated to **"Impact Squantum"** at the time of your passing. Or it could involve a planned giving method such as a charitable remainder trust or Donor Advised Fund. While gifts like these may not provide immediate financial benefit to our Generosity Initiative, they are marvelous gifts of faith commitment to carry on the work of **"Impact Squantum"** for future generations.