

## Giving

I have been asked to speak to you about giving and I can only give you my personal point of view.

I am very fortunate. God has given me a great deal. A wonderful family, a career I enjoy and the opportunity to contribute to the society I live in.

One of the great gifts is the Church of England.

I get a lot from the Church of England.

I get the chance to enter the presence of God and feel the comfort I get from that experience

I get a chance to worship in a way that satisfies my sense of spirituality and allows me to enjoy my encounters with God.

I get a building to do it in.

I get a group of people to do it with.

I get a chance to play a part in the worship and people who allow me help with the organization of the church.

I get liturgy, ritual, tradition and an excellent Vicar to manage it all.

At a local level I get Church House. A group of perpetually helpful and pleasant people who help me carry out my tasks as PCC Secretary.

People who have a detailed and encyclopaedic knowledge of the Byzantine structure of the Church of England and can immediately connect me with any expert I need to consult.

I get two superb Bishops and a magnificent group of clergy who are knowledgeable, intelligible and always willing to discuss the aspects of our religion that delight, or trouble me. Often the everyday world occupies me to the exclusion of spirituality and my conversations with the clergy of this Diocese always bring me back to the realization of the importance of God's presence in my life.

It allows me to have my say in national debates more reliably than most politicians will.

I get leadership, erudition and thoughtful consideration of the world around me and beyond.

Nationally I get an organization that promotes my religion, stands up for what is right in the society we live in and protects my right to worship the way I want to.

It also produces a lot of material and discussion that engages and fascinates me. My reading and contemplation of the materials produced always make me reflect on my ideas and actions.

To show my devotion and gratitude to God I have to worship and demonstrate my beliefs in my actions.

To worship in the way I wish to and contribute effectively I choose to support the Church of England.

To keep this organization going I have to GIVE time and money.

I am giving to keep the fabric of my church together and fund our activities.

I am giving to pay our Parish Share that pays the costs of our invaluable Vicar and something towards the costs of the rest of the Church.

I am giving to support the local and national organizations that help me deal with my comparative good fortune compared to the rest of this world.

I am giving for the local and national institution that provides me with considered and thoughtful guidance,  
An organization that puts my point of view forwards in a world that seems to have different values,  
An organization that protects my right to continue worshiping in the way I wish and that is not guaranteed as it once was.  
An organization that connects me to the 1000 year old traditions and beliefs of my county and my country.

I feel very hypocritical talking about giving because, like most people, I get parsimonious moments. I spend quite a lot on material things and on entertainment and when I think about it I am challenged about how much I give to church. I might be happy to spend £5 on a bottle of wine or a £1000 on a new plasma TV but would I give that to the church? If I want to continue to enjoy the benefits, and I think that they are worth it, then maybe I should take the time just to think again about what I am prepared to offer.

I hope that many of you feel the same.

*John Hanson*