

Making Change

EPISODE TWO



You're All Talk

Sharing

Sharing is something that we are expected to do from an early age. When young children shout “mine!”, caregivers attempt to teach them to share. From toddlerhood onward, sharing can be difficult.

Relating to money, sharing can mean various things. It can mean sharing with the church through tithing a portion of your income, sharing with various charities by donating, and sharing with others. Acts of hospitality or giving material goods to those in need can also be examples of sharing.

In this session, group members can reflect on what sharing money looks like to them.

Opening

Choose one of the scripture passages below, and read it aloud to the group. Have people reflect on the following question either individually or in small groups: How do you currently share your financial resources with others?

Scripture

Leviticus 27:30-34 (tithing 10%); Matthew 6:1-3 (don't brag about giving to poor); Luke 21:1-4 (Jesus observing the woman who gave all); Acts 4:34-35 (early churches shared all in common); 2 Corinthians 9:7 (God loves a cheerful giver)

Video

Watch the "Sharing" video. www.makingchange.ca/episode-2/

Discussion

General questions

1. This session's video refers to tithing as a form of sharing our money. Tithing is a biblical standard of giving back to God as an act of worship. The definition of tithe is to offer one-tenth of any income, property, or produce. Some people think of tithing as "giving back to God." Do you tithe? Why or why not? If so, how much do you tithe? Do you do it out of obligation, guilt, or joy?
2. Consider this quotation by Erich Fromm: "Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much."
3. How does your church encourage generosity and sharing?
4. Do you consider giving to charities to be part of your church giving, or separate from your church giving?

Questions related to the video

5. Terry spoke of the established church as a corporation. One caller, Jill, talked about how giving to the church was a valuable investment for her family. How do you view giving to the church?
6. What is your attitude toward giving to the poor? Give, trusting that God will take care of the details? God helps those who help themselves? God loves a cheerful giver? Is there one caller/character that you could relate to more than others on the topic of giving to homeless people on the streets? What approaches to giving to the homeless have you heard about? Which ones could you see yourself trying?
7. Sandy interviewed two youth who gave money to girls in Bangladesh for their school uniforms instead of spending the money on prom dresses. What other stories of generosity have you heard? Have any of these inspired you to give?

8. All religions encourage generosity. Buddhist give to release greed and selfishness. Muslims are expected to give 2.5%. Find out about various faith groups in your area, and how they encourage the giving and sharing of financial resources.

Questions related to scripture

9. The story that George told, about his son who gave 1/3 of his money to a homeless person, is reminiscent of the woman who gave generously in Luke 21:1-4. Read this passage together and discuss Jesus' response to her. Imagine what Jesus would have said about sharing money if he were one of the callers to this show.

10. In the Bible, firstfruit giving meant giving the best and first produce and livestock as an offering to God. Do you give your "firstfruits" to the church, or your "leftovers"?

11. Traditionally, many Mennonite groups have helped each other through community efforts such as barn raisings. Read Acts 4:34-35 together, where believers shared possessions and money. What mutual aid projects do you know about in your area? Contact someone at xxx to talk to your group about sharing financial resources with those in need. Imagine sharing things in common like the churches in Acts. Mutual aid is a way of sharing with others. What other ways can we share things in common?

Prayer

Read the following prayer entitled "The air we breathe offering prayer" by Carol Penner from her worship resources blog: www.leadinginworship.com.

We have the means to give,
we have the reason to give,
and there are many waiting for us to give.
Yet often, our hands hold back,
and we hoard what we have for ourselves.
God of grace,
help us live and give in your kingdom of love,
where there are no enemies,
only brothers and sisters,
and kindness is the air we breathe.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.