

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION | 2009

Why We Give

The Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell

In my own study of the scripture and in my own life with God I have discovered that **giving can be both a "duty" and a "delight."** First, I feel a certain obligation to give to this church since I am a part of that particular community and benefit from its ministry. The Bible says that we *should each give according to our means and do our "fair share" to support the congregation* (2 Corinthians 8:3, 11-13). But that is the "duty" part. **The "delight" comes in giving as a grateful response to God's grace.** So, I give to this church as a way of expressing my love for God, of touching God's heart with my own. This brings me incredible joy.



Together, duty and delight represent the conscious motivations for my giving, but if we go deeper I think the real reason I give has little to do with me. It is the work of the Holy Spirit and a result of the transformation that God has worked within me. Left to my own devices, I would be too selfish to ever give anything to anyone. But *I have become a new creature in Christ Jesus* (2 Corinthians 5:17). *He lives in me* (Galatians 2:20) and *the Holy Spirit produces virtuous fruit that changes me from the inside out* (Galatians 5:22-23). Simply put, I think that **we give because the goodness of God takes hold of us and makes us into more generous and loving people** than we would ever be otherwise.

Adapted from Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life by Mark Allan Powell (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 2006). Used by permission.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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