

BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

As we prepare to return our Statements of Intent for our generosity for this year in worship today, several of our Council members have shared their excitement about our ministry moving forward:

- My vision for Zion is to encourage people to serve the Lord and know the joy of fellowship with his people.

Judy B.

- Our goal is to continue to grow and serve our community and congregation in Christ our Lord for years to come.

Glenn F.

- We are looking forward to expanding the ministries available to our congregation and the community.

Brian L.

Here's a comment from one of our younger members:

- Zion Evangelical Church means a lot to me, and I feel as though when I'm in church it's just a relief and a place where all my worries go away. Also, all the socials I've helped with are amazing, especially just seeing all the happy faces that come walking through those church doors to get a good meal. So this church means a lot to me."

Darien M.

Keeping our ministry strong will enable us to dream about an ever-growing ministry into the future. Take time this week to reflect on the ways in which connection to our ministry has impacted you and those you know and love in the past year and start dreaming about what God may be up to here moving forward.

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DECIDE TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY

Little has ever been accomplished without sacrifice. This is true in our homes, our work, our church, our country. Sacrifice is a necessary component of successful living.

And so it is with the Christian life and faith. Our salvation cost God the cross. Bonhoeffer rightly said there is no cheap grace. Much of church giving is only token giving, averaging about two percent of income. No wonder there is so little joy or satisfaction in it! It requires no sacrifice! We have given only what we could easily afford, what we would not really miss.

Experience has shown that giving, to be meaningful and joyful, has to be sacrificial! Each will have to determine what amount or percentage is sacrificial for his or her circumstances. But experience again suggests that for most people sacrificial giving begins at five percent of income with proportions under five percent falling into the token giving category.

Church interest is often low, studies have shown, because investment is low. There is no sacrifice. It doesn't really cost anything. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." (*Luke 12:34*) Where is my treasure? That is where you will find your heart.