



Using the Offering in Online Worship during COVID-19

Why sustaining giving is important during COVID-19

Although we are not able to gather in worship for some time, our mission as churches remains constant, and that necessary to that mission is resource. The practical resource of our giving enables our churches to be places of hope, prayer and support during this difficult time – it enables us to live out our calling to be Christ in the world, and to serve our communities to meet their needs. Giving is also a fundamental part of our discipleship – we give because God first gave to us, and so we are invited to respond to that through giving the very best we can offer. Our giving forms an expression of our faith, of grace, and of love of God.

Why include the offering in online worship?

It is said that, at its best, giving is an act of worship. During COVID-19, many churches have taken to offering online worship, to retain a pattern of prayer and connect with worshipping communities. In normal practice, the offering is the most visible and tangible expression of our giving as Christian people, and our offering practice should reflect this. On a practical level, including the offering during online worship will help to remind people that resourcing our churches' mission and ministry is vitally important now as it ever has been - and on a discipleship level, allows our Christian communities to continue to offer ourselves as an act of faith and expression of our love of God.

Top Tips on using the offering during online worship

- Make sure the offering moment is sacred and an **act of worship**; be focused, prayerful and intentional.
- **Encourage people** to give, and allow people to give.
- Remember to **be thankful**, for the gifts of God and for the gifts of people to help resource the mission of the church.
- **Be clear with your message**, make sure you are explaining what that giving enables, and think about the language you are using. Talk about your church's vision, and what you are doing missionally to support and serve your community during COVID-19.
- **Allow time** for people to give, whether that is space for people to reflect prayerfully on their standing orders, for time for people to make an act of offering at home.
- For people who don't currently give by standing order, **offer options for people to give easily**. Give people ideas as you introduce the service, or the offering – point people towards online donate buttons if you have one on your website, or encourage cash givers to put aside their offering in a 'giving jar'.
- Make use of **suggested scripture** and **offering prayers** which are suitable during COVID-19 and connects with online offerings. These can be found below.

Ideas for whole-life offering

- **Using a mirror – ‘give yourself’.** Place a large mirror behind the bowl or jar in your household. As people see their reflection as they offer their gift, encourage them to see their gift as a token of their life, values and priorities.
- **Generosity Challenge.** Ask people during your online service to think of three acts of generosity they will do this week.

Example offering sentences

Deut 16.17:	All shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.
Matt 6.19-21	Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
Romans 12.1	I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
2 Corinthians 9.8	And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.
1 Timothy 6.17-19	As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.
Hebrews 13.16	Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Example offering prayers

Lord God,
sustainer, comforter, and redeemer.
We place these gifts into your hands,
both from our homes and online;
accept our offerings
as a response to your unfailing love,
that our faithful giving
may bear witness to your generosity,
and your song of hope may be more widely sung
in our time of distress;
we make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ,
our Lord. Amen.

God of grace,
in our time of darkness
you bless us with gifts of light.
We bring these offerings to you -
our gifts at home, our gifts online -
and with them we offer our lives;
that they may be used to serve others,
and give you glory.
We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ,
our Lord. Amen.