



Communication

The value of appreciation

Introduction

Saying thank you is a courtesy and should be done for no other reason than that. However, there are also other important considerations. As part of a *Giving in Grace* programme, returning a response form has an entirely appropriate emotional element to it. People feel they want to support their church, but at some point reality and rational reflection kicks in: *Can I afford this? How will I do it? Will my giving make any difference? Is anyone else responding?* The thank you letter addresses these important questions.

- A thank you letter should be sent to every person who returns a response form *within one week* of receiving it. A prompt thank you letter demonstrates that the response was both noticed and valued.
- A response which declines an increase in giving due to circumstances is a valid response and receives a thank you letter.
- The thank you letter helps bridge the gap between a positive intent to respond and translating that response into action.
- The thank you letter affirms the emotional identification and underlines it with an affirmation of the rational basis of the response: this is positive, appropriate and makes a difference.
- The letter is about appreciation not just thanks. Thanks is a response to the gift and the difference it makes. Appreciation builds relationships and affirms the key place of the giver within the life of the church. Those who respond are not passive givers but partners in and advocates of a cause that matters and makes a difference.
- Thank you letters contribute to the momentum of the overall response to Giving in Grace and

function as the first update on the progress of the initiative. Respondents are assured that they are not alone, that the initiative has momentum and that they are partners in a cause they share with other people.

- Thank you means thank you. Do not clutter the message and take shortcuts on follow up action by enclosing Gift Aid forms or envelopes etc. Let your thank you be genuine and clear.

Any subsequent visit to bring requested information should be in addition to the thank you.

Top tips for thanking

- Write to say thank you within a week of receiving the response form.
- Thank people for their response, even if they are not able to increase their giving at the moment.
- Many people will ask for additional information (such as Gift Aid forms); never delay sending the thank you letter in order to include additional information.
- Keep it personal: hand write the greeting and sign in blue ink; avoid the impression that it is a photocopied letter. Write "I" not "We" letters; avoid impersonal mailing labels.
- Say thank you clearly - without hinting at an appeal for more.
- Emphasise the ministry and mission made possible by giving pledges. This is not about bills being paid. Tell people what you are now able to achieve
- Stress the response from others – the gift is part of something positive involving others also committed to the church.
- Appreciation matters not just thanks, e.g. "your early response is a real encouragement".
- Keep it real: avoid clichés, jargon and going over the top.