

Differentiation: thinking about leaders

Differentiation is all about the different experiences, motivations, practices in our congregations. We don't do one size fits all. This optional paper offers reflections on the motivations and characteristics of the Leader grouping in a differentiated list of church members.



This paper complements the thinking about differentiation in *One Body, Many Parts*, found at the [Differentiate tab](#). Advice on differentiation in a mailing list is found at the [Building the Database tab](#).

Defining the leaders

Definition of the Leader grouping is very much a local decision. It will always include formal leadership positions such as Parochial Church Council members in Anglican churches or elders and deacons or recognised leadership roles in other denominations or affiliations. Often such leaders will be legal trustees of the church who have a legal duty of care in addition to their spiritual leadership. They must lead in finance as in all other areas of church life.

In practice not all in formal leader positions will be committed, regular planned givers but they should be engaged and challenged as such.

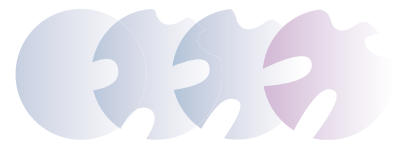
The Leader grouping for many churches will also include those in informal leadership structures which will vary from church to church and can be diverse: retired clergy, Readers, lay preachers; 'heads of department' such as youth leaders or pastoral care; possibly small group leaders in a cell church structure. Some churches might define leadership as those who have served on the church council in the last three years.

Again, it remains true that not all informal leaders will be committed, planned givers; we still engage and challenge folks as leaders. Of course, not all our more generous givers will hold leadership roles in the church.

Leaders, key characteristics

The majority of Leaders will invest their time, talents and treasure in the life and ministry of the local church. 'Involvement' - the commitment to give time and skills and energy - is strongly correlated with higher levels of giving. (*R Stonebraker IJRR 2015*). So invest time in Leaders. If you have capacity then don't just write to them. Where possible, talk to Leaders using the case statement as a guide to a conversation around resourcing a church vision. Seek their opinions, reflections, prayers.

- Leaders are not generally passive givers but are involved in the vision and direction of the church.
- They will be or have been in positions of authority and leadership in their church.
- They will often be involved in a range of church ministries or have been so in the past.
- They will have a passion for the church, valuing its presence in the community, in their life and in the service of the gospel.
- They will usually be long-standing members of the church or have moved from another church and playing an active part.



- Most will identify themselves very much as Christians and certainly as church members with a passion for their church.

Leaders: stewardship characteristics

The 2012 UK Giving Insight research (self selected respondents) found those with additional involvement (leadership, church council or home group) were likely to give at a level as high as 50% greater than those without involvement. It also found they were more likely to give by standing order (at the time the most helpful way to give regularly) and to give a percentage of income.

The statistically robust 2020 *Anglican Giving Survey* suggests greater church attendance is correlated with higher levels of giving. It also notes that Regular church service attendees engage more often in additional church activities. We can loosely observe the following:

- Many Leaders have been and are generous and some giving sacrificially.
- A good number will be influenced by and responsive to biblical teaching about giving, including the tithe.
- Most will review their giving regularly, if not automatically, then in response to a request.
- Most Leaders are open to give by the Parish Giving Scheme (or standing order) and where appropriate they will Gift Aid their giving.
- Some members will not match their evident commitment of time and talents with an equivalent stewardship commitment. Indeed, a small few may see the former as compensation for *not* giving of their treasure.

Leaders: refresh, renew as you review

As with our Planned givers we invite our Leaders to *review* how much they give to their church. This is a key message. We don't, we shouldn't, we can't duck the challenge to generous discipleship.

But we also encourage Leaders to *refresh* how they give to their church. This is a clear invitation to join the Parish Giving Scheme wherever that way of giving is possible. Leaders play a key part in building, modelling and advocating for the robust giving base that the Parish Giving Scheme establishes.

There is also a challenge to *renew* giving, encouraging proportional giving, that is to give percentage of income, the principle behind the tithe. In addition, very often in a stewardship programme Leaders will have the opportunity of offering the first, lead gifts before the wider congregation is asked to make its response.



They will be asked to make their individual, personal (and entirely confidential) response early in the programme. Then, the anonymous, corporate total of increased giving (for example, from the Church Council) can be communicated in the letters sent to the wider congregation. In this way, leaders can with appropriate confidentiality model the generosity they are seeking from the congregation.