

This week Pastor Sharon brings us the last installment of our "40 Days of Community" campaign with the message entitled "Living a Generous Life."

There is a special word that describes how we come together as a body of believers. The Greek word for fellowship is "koinonia." This word can have different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. The meaning we are focused on this week is the idea of generosity. As a follower of Christ, you are called to be generous in all things – your time, your talents, your resources, etc. However, you may be tempted to ask what's in it for me or what good does being generous accomplish? Pastor Sharon gives us five reasons.

First, you should be generous because it creates community. In the Books of Acts, the early church shared everything with each other. They lived, served, and worshipped together as one community of believers. When you are generous with your time, talents, and resources, you help create and promote that same sense of community the first Christians had.

Second, be generous because it strengthens your faith. In II Corinthians, Paul tells us that when we give generously we will reap generously (II Cor. 9:6). Knowing this, you can give generously with confidence that God will bless you in abundance.

Third, being generous is an investment in eternity. As Pastor Sharon says, you can't take it with you but you can send it on ahead. By giving in this life to support God's work and bless others, you are sending your treasure ahead of you. In Matthew, Jesus reminds you "to store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20). By giving, your bank account here may get smaller, but your heavenly account grows.

Fourth, being generous blesses you in return. Have you ever helped someone else and felt like you were the one blessed? In Acts, Paul reminds us that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." When you give back to God by supporting your church or meeting a need in someone's life, you can be assured that "God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to" (Deut. 15:10).

Fifth and finally, give generously because it makes you more like God. As Bob and Elaine talked about giving to the IFH campaign, they said they see it not as an obligation or option but as an opportunity. When you are able to see the opportunities in front of you to bless others and to have eternal impact on your community, you begin to see things from a more divine perspective.

There are many more reasons why you should be generous, but Pastor Sharon gives us a solid understanding of the importance of generosity. Challenge yourself this week to give more of yourself and see how you can bless others by doing so. Do you see a need? What can you do to fulfill it?