

Saints Alive! Living Generously



“Now concerning the collection for the saints: **you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia.** On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.”

—1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (NRSV)

Week 2

A Cloud of Giving Witnesses

“[Y]ou should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia.”

—1 Corinthians 16:1b

You should... “You” is not a general instruction to a vague audience. It is specific. Paul is addressing the Corinthian congregation, and he knew and cared for its members.

...follow the directions... Paul not only asked the congregation to give; he expected their participation. And he told them how they could accomplish this collection, which would be an expression of their shared faith in Jesus Christ.

...I gave to the churches of Galatia. The members of the church at Corinth were not alone in their giving. Other communities of faith shared in this common witness.

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Scott looked out at all the faces turned to hear his invitation to the morning offering. He had been asked to make his invitation personal, and his father came to mind. Though Scott was just fourteen when his father died, he remembered his father's clear message about living a generous life: Receive the gifts of others. Give gratitude a chance to grow. Share what you have—both your gifts and your gratitude.

As he shared about his father, Scott was reminded of the many people whose gifts of Spirit, help, and money he had enjoyed. “A great cloud of witnesses,” was how he thought of them. He mentioned a couple of those people and invited members of the congregation to share names of those who had shaped their own generosity. Quite a few people spoke a name or two aloud, and then Scott prayed:

O God of specific people, in specific places, in specific times, we thank you for Jesus Christ, who has shown us what an abundant life looks like. For all those people who demonstrate generous ways of living, we give you thanks. Amen.