

Reverse Offering

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Our pastor shocked us one Sunday with a “reverse offering.” When ushers passed out collection containers full of \$10 bills, each person was supposed to take one. We were challenged to invest these dollars for God, especially in ways to help the downtrodden people in our society.

Reports of the \$10 challenge flooded back over the next several weeks. They revealed church members’ hearts for the poor, special ministries or missions, and creative ways of encouraging the “least of these” around them.

Some donated the amount to a local urban ministry offering food vouchers, used clothing and furniture, and housing help. Several bought cookies, dozens of eggs, and big cans of coffee for a soup kitchen. One used the money to buy bowls and cutlery for the facility. Still others gave to a “safe shelter” for street teens and a home for troubled women starting over in life.

Some people bought food gift cards for homeless persons. Someone filled zip-top bags with packaged snacks and a note

about the community soup kitchen. One couple shared a carryout meal and conversation with a homeless couple in a public park. Another family provided two nights of motel lodging for a homeless woman with mental illness who feared for her safety. One family bought yarn for a group that knits and gives away 12,000 hats a year to children and elderly in need.

Some simply re-gifted the money to a Christian radio station, a pro-life pregnancy counseling center, the church’s teen retreat “scholarship fund,” an organization fighting suicide, the Red Cross, and to their sponsored child in a compassion ministry. Other donations went to the local church’s existing mission work among Burundian widows, Nigerian Muslims, at-risk children in Belize, and the hungry in Cambodia.

One family mustered the courage to visit a man they’d noticed sitting daily by a loved one’s grave at the city cemetery. They offered to pray for him, then took their \$10 to the Christian bookstore to buy him a little wall hanging about the hope of heaven. Another member bought a large-print Bible for a woman who’d just visited the church and asked for one.

Others bought lunch for a discouraged neighbor, gourmet coffee and a muffin for a hurting friend, a bouquet to cheer someone with brain cancer, and a plant for a hospitalized woman who has no church family. Still others used the \$10 to help them make a home-cooked meal for a family in distress, as a no-strings-attached gift to an unemployed man, and as a coffee fund for women meeting at a local coffee shop to study Christian financial concepts.

Others gave the money as a tip to a needy waitress, to a newspaper carrier who works three routes and other jobs, to a janitor whose daughter had just suffered a heart attack, to an abandoned mother of two, to a neighbor with an abusive husband, and to a difficult “loner” at work facing large medical bills. One family bought a Christian marriage book for a mother and stepfather having marriage problems.

What did the \$10 giveaway teach? That \$10 can do a lot, with God. Another lesson: the church didn’t need to pass out \$10 bills for this to happen. **END**

Ten dollars can do a lot, with God



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