# Giving in Grace

## Stewardship Tasks

# Creating the age giving profile

An Age Giving Profile throws fresh light on the patterns of regular planned giving in the local congregation and how the future might look. This paper offers practical guidance on how to complete the Age Giving Profile spreadsheet and to understand the information the profile generates.

The Age Giving Profile is one of a small number of tools in the Financial Analysis section of Stewardship Tasks. [i] Papers outlining the value of an Age Giving Profile and a fictional church profile by way of illustration as well as this guidance paper can be found at the Age Giving Profile tab.

## Create an Giving Profile first

An Age Giving Profile yields important information for any church wishing to deepen its stewardship ministry. This rich tool builds upon the insights gleaned from a Giving Profile which you are strongly encouraged to prepare before creating an Age Giving Profile. Each Profile sheds light on a different aspect of planned giving in the church.

The Giving Profile is akin to a hand held lamp which illuminates what is happening around us, in the here and now. For most churches this is arguably the more pressing and immediate need and the insights lay a solid foundation for reflection and action. The Age Giving Profile is more akin to a torch or spotlight which illuminates the way ahead. It sheds light on how giving might look tomorrow, helps us assess the critical challenge of 'ageing money' and some of the strategic stewardship challenges before us.

The simple two-step process outlined at the Giving Profile tab makes it very easy to collate the data which will generate both Profiles.

## Requirements

Have to hand the Excel file *Giving Data* created in the first step of the two-step process outlined at the Giving Profile tab. This file contains all the giving data you need whilst preserving confidentiality so that the Age Giving Profile is an anonymous exercise.

Note also that for the automatic calculations in the Age Giving Profile spreadsheet to function correctly, an Excel version that is 2007 or newer *must* be used. If you have problems set the 'Calculation Options' to 'Automatic'. The help provided with Excel contains guidance.

## Creating your Age Giving Profile

1. Open the *Data Giving* file created in Step One and make sure that the Data Entry sheet from that file is visible.
2. From the Age Giving Profile tab download the Excel file *Age Giving Profile template* and save the file using whatever name you prefer.
3. Open the file. Across the bottom of the screen are four worksheets. Don't worry; you will only enter data in one sheet and guidance is offered below on the others. Click to the Data Entry worksheet.
4. Cell C4 of the *Giving Data* file records the period to which the giving data relates. Simply type this same information into green Cell D4 of the *Age Giving Profile template*.
5. Now go back to your *Giving Data* file. You are going to copy all the data from Columns A through D, that is three blue coloured columns

and one yellow column. Columns A (*Annual Total*) and Column D (*Age Band*) are the essential data columns; without this data you cannot create your Age Giving Profile. Column B (*Gift Aid?*) and Column C (*Giving Method*) are both optional. If there is no data in either or both of them then your Age Giving Profile can still be produced but will not be as rich because of the missing data.

6.  Click into the first blue cell, Cell A9, and highlight all your data in the blue and yellow cells in Columns A through D and then copy them.

7.  Now turn to your Age Giving Profile file and make sure you are looking at the Data Entry worksheet. Click in Cell A9, the first of the light blue cells and simply paste in the giving data. All the copied data will be entered and you should have data in the three blue Columns A, B and C and the single yellow column D.

8.  Save the document and that is that! Job done.

## So what are we looking at?

First, click to the worksheet cunningly titled, Age Giving Profile. Assuming you have entered data into all columns, A through to D, then this is the richest Age Giving Profile, charting all the data you have entered. There are four charts on the first page when printed and two on the second and each chart is accompanied by a brief explanation. When ready, print this in colour and use it to inform discussion at the finance or stewardship committee. Missing date will result in incomplete charts. If you have only completed columns A and D see the guidance under the heading below, *Simple Age Giving Profile*.

**Age distribution and method of planned giving**
This single bar chart offers an 'at a glance' snapshot of the age distribution of your planned givers. If you have included data in Column C (*Giving Method*) of the Data Entry worksheet it will also indicate the chosen method of giving according to age band. Do you have a significant skew towards older givers and therefore ageing money? What issues does it raise about the use of weekly giving envelopes which, for all their advantages, are no longer a robust medium for giving as church attendance patterns are ever more fluid?

**Percentage and total amount of giving by age band**
The next two charts offer a different perspective. The pie chart on the left shows the % of total planned giving offered by the respective age bands. The bar chart on the right shows the total amount of giving by age band but also sub-divides this information for

giving by method. Again you are asking questions about relative dependence on older givers but are there also lessons to be learned about the method of giving by age band?

**Average and median gifts by age band and method**
The next chart explores levels of giving in each age band, sub-divided into average giving levels by method of giving. Research suggests that you will see higher average giving from 'Bank' methods of giving (standing order, Direct Debit, charitable giving accounts and payroll) than from weekly envelopes. Is that true for you and if so, what might it suggest for your stewardship strategy? The black lines across the middle of each age band indicated the median level of gift which is arguably a more helpful perspective to understand actual giving in the church. [ii] Half of your givers in each age band are giving less than the median level of gift for that band.

## Gift Aid giving by age band

Finally, over the page of the Age Giving Profile are four additional charts which break down the age banded giving into tax efficient planned giving (TEPG) and Other Planned Giving (OPG) – that is people who give but on whose gifts the church cannot reclaim tax under Gift Aid. If you do not have data in Column B (*Gift Aid?*) of the Data Entry worksheet these charts will be blank and you can ignore them. Gift Aided giving is for many churches the single biggest income stream and it can be helpful to look at the age distribution and methods of giving of our Gift Aid givers to get a perspective on our current health and sustainability, our relative dependence on ageing money, what the future might look like and how we might take action.

## Simple Age Giving profile

The rich data in the Age Giving Profile worksheet offers much food for thought for a small finance or stewardship committee. However, for presentation purposes, say to a church council, you may prefer a rather simpler Age Giving Profile. If so, click to the worksheet *Simple Age Giving Profile*. The charts on this Profile are simplified and reduced in number to fit on a single page. There is no distinction between 'envelope' and 'bank' methods of giving. Nor is there any distinction between tax efficient and other planned giving, that is giving on which tax either is not or cannot be reclaimed under Gift Aid.

## Simple Age Giving profile: small churches

In smaller churches with few planned givers it may

well not be appropriate to sub-divide the age ranges either by method of giving or by Gift Aid. For a small number of givers this can cloud the clarity of a simple age giving profile. Moreover, further sub-division of a few planned givers might just compromise confidentiality.

Small churches should click to the green worksheet tab, *Age Giving Profile small church*. This Profile is identical to the Simple Age Profile but the design of the chart has been recalibrated so that the vertical axis works for a small number of givers.

## Conclusion

The age giving profile richly compliments the giving profile by looking forward to what the future giving of our church might look like and what action we might take for a healthy present and a hopeful future.

### Notes and Resources

i   For clarity, please note that some readers will be familiar with some simple tools for financial analysis from the case statement section within the Programme strand of Giving in Grace. The financial analysis tools in the Stewardship Tasks strand, are standalone tools to better understand giving patterns in the church and offer a greater degree of functionality.

ii  An explanation of the median is found in the notes to the side of the chart and is explored more fully in the paper Lifting the Bonnet.