

# How much should I give to support Quaker work?



## Foreword

The idea for this guide came from realising how challenging it can be to identify how much we should be giving to local, area and central Quaker work. Many Friends find talking about money difficult and yet giving to the work of the Society is grounded in our faith. You can use this guide as a spark for an Afterword after meeting or it could be circulated amongst Friends as part of your annual schedule or appeal for contributions. We hope, however it is used, that it will prompt conversations, reflection and giving.

*Peter Green, Barney Smith and Graham Torr on behalf of the Giving Advocates group.*



## A guide

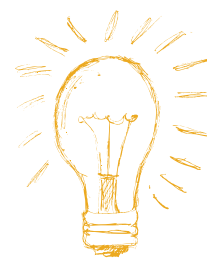
*Advices & queries 20: "Do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?"*

*Advices & queries* provides us with challenge and inspiration on how we as Quakers live our faith. This includes giving – both giving service and financial giving.

We are asked to give to the work of our local and area meetings, as well as Britain Yearly Meeting, which carries out work on behalf of Quakers in Britain, providing a collective voice for issues of concern and supporting the life of our meetings.

But **how much** should we be giving? This is a question that collectors and treasurers are often asked. There are practical guidelines we can point Friends to – for example, BYM suggests a figure of £240 per year per member. Many local and area meetings provide members with a similar figure.

However, what people can afford to give will vary widely. For some, the figure of £240 is too much. For others, it is a drop in the ocean. Quakers are invited to consider giving with equal generosity. By giving more if you can afford it, you will help make up the difference for those who are not able to give as much.



*'We live in a society which encourages us to spend on ourselves whatever we can afford to spend (or spend even more by borrowing). We will all be influenced by this and buy/rent homes, cars and holidays, making the comforting assumption that no one will criticise us. We need a strongly countervailing culture to oppose this and champion the sharing of our income rather than spending it on ourselves. As a society we are still very rich by either historical or geographical comparisons. At the same time we need to protect Friends who may feel weighed down by the thought that they are not able to pay their way.'*

Barney Smith, Collector, Bristol AM

Here are a few ways in which you might self-assess your giving potential. These are only models, which can allow you to compare what you might do with what you actually do. Family responsibilities and other particular circumstances can be factored in on a case-by-case basis.

### 1. A percentage of income

The tradition of tithing suggests a simple calculation: 10% of income to be donated to good causes (that might include your family, charitable and other donations, including Quakers). However, while 10% may be a good guide for some, this formula is hard on those with low incomes<sup>1</sup> who will need every penny to cover the essential costs of living. A better alternative would be to calculate one's disposable income after tax and the essential costs of living have been deducted. What's essential will depend on family circumstances, care responsibilities and where you live. Once you arrive at your disposable income, how much should you give to the organisations you support – local and national – that are working for a better community and a better world?

### 2. Matching pleasure and generosity

Calculate your spending and sort it into three categories.

A, Costs of housing, care, electricity, gas, transport, food, clothing, IT and other essential things which enable you to live your life and be useful in the community.

B, Costs of entertainment at home, outings, holidays, eating out, etc.

C, Giving to organisations whose purposes you support, including Quakers.

Then consider: Is it possible that less could be spent on A? Is it possible that you could match more closely what you give in C to what you spend on B? And how much of C should you give to Quakers?

### 3. Giving to local, area and central Quaker work

Once you have decided how much you can afford to give to Quaker work each month, how much should you be giving to local meeting (LM), area meeting (AM) and BYM? Local meetings generally have lower costs than area meetings and area meetings lower costs than BYM. We have heard this formula from several Friends: give your LM 1/6, AM 1/3 and BYM 1/2 (using multiples of 1/6 makes the division easy). So, if you can afford to give £42 a month, you might give £21 to BYM, £14 to AM and £7 to your LM. But it will depend on the wealth of your AM and how your AM and region organise their finances.

We know that the circumstances of people's lives will change over time, depending on employment status, family and care responsibilities, and other commitments. But we hope these models provide a useful starting point to help Friends in their discernment on their level of giving – to both Quaker work and other good causes.

Additionally, Friends might wish to explore tools for managing their charitable giving such as a CAF 'Give As You Earn' account.

*'From my own experience, a good way of managing how much I give has been to arrange for some of my gross pay (now pension) to be paid directly into a CAF Give As You Earn charity account, from which I make monthly standing order payments to the charities I support including BYM.'*

Graham Torr, Friend & BYM trustee.

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1. This simple tool indicates how your household fits into the national income scale:

[https://ifs.org.uk/tools\\_and\\_resources/where\\_do\\_you\\_fit\\_in](https://ifs.org.uk/tools_and_resources/where_do_you_fit_in)

## When we are able, to give financially is a gift

By Peter Green

I reminded myself of the question in *Advices & queries (A&Qs) 20*: “Do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?” and realised that for me, and perhaps for you too, this begs many other questions. This led me to develop some additional A&Qs on financial giving which I hope you will find helpful when prayerfully considering and regularly reviewing your financial giving to the Society. When reading them, remember that some Ffriends (i.e. members and regular attenders) may not be able to contribute as much as others or, perhaps, not at all.

1. Do I remember that we are a do-it-together religious society, a priesthood of all believers with no paid priests and community run? Do I appreciate that to make it work everyone, both members and regular attenders, needs to contribute, including financially, to the extent they are able?
2. Do I appreciate that in their local and area business meetings Ffriends discern the cost of Quaker work and activities that should be carried out in the next period? Do I realise that the area meeting needs to raise sufficient income to cover those costs?
3. Am I being generous enough in my giving to Quakers? Do I give sufficient priority to my financial giving to Quakers? Do I allocate sufficient of my disposable income to Quakers? Some Friends have used 5% of their net disposable income as a starting point for their consideration.
4. Could I afford to increase my financial giving to Quakers?

Peter Green – from an article, *The Spiritual Gift of Giving*, North East Thames Area Meeting Newsletter (a full version of this article can be found by emailing [contributions@quaker.org.uk](mailto:contributions@quaker.org.uk))

***This guide was developed and produced by the Giving Advocates group who are Friends who are passionate and committed to encouraging giving.***



**JOIN US:** If you would like to join the Giving Advocates group, please email Beth at [bethf@quaker.org.uk](mailto:bethf@quaker.org.uk) or visit the website at [www.quaker.org.uk/giving-advocates](http://www.quaker.org.uk/giving-advocates).