Redistribute at Home

Why Do We Share What We Have?

Every Advent, our church practices Redistribute. We choose to spend a little less on ourselves so that we can give more to people who need it.

But why?

Redistribute isn't just about raising money. It's about learning to live like Jesus.

We live in a world that is always telling us we need more. More clothes, more toys, more things that promise to make us happy. Sometimes we start to think that what we have makes us special or important. We can get so used to wanting and buying more that we forget to ask if we really need it or how our choices affect other people.

But Jesus shows us a different way to live.

He teaches us that everything we have (our money, possessions, toys, food, and time) is a gift from God. These are gifts we can enjoy and be thankful for, but also gifts we can use to love and care for others.

Redistribute helps us practice choosing a little less for ourselves so that others can have more. And as we practice, God helps us become more like Jesus…teaching us to care more about people than things.

We Believe There is Enough

The Bible tells stories of God providing enough when people trust God and share with one another.

When God gave manna to Israel in the wilderness, some people gathered a lot and others gathered a little. Yet Scripture says: *"The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."* - Exodus 16:18

Hundreds of years later, Paul used this same story when encouraging Christians to share their resources with people experiencing need: *"The goal is equality, as it is written, 'The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.'"* - 2 Corinthians 8:13–15

God's abundance doesn't mean every person automatically has everything they need. Around the world (and in our own city) some people have far more than they need while others lack food, housing, safety, health care, or opportunity.

So an important question for followers of Jesus is not only "Do I have enough?"

We can also ask: “Could what I have help someone else have enough?”

Talk together

- What are some things our household has enough of?
- What is the difference between something we need and something we want?
- Why might God want people who have more than enough to share with people who don't have enough?

Jesus Teaches us that our Money Matters

Jesus talked about money and possessions because they shape our hearts. He warned: *“Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”* - Luke 12:15

And he taught: *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* - Matthew 6:21

The things we buy aren't necessarily bad. Gifts, special meals, decorations, and celebrations can all be received with gratitude.

But buying things can also become such a normal part of our lives that we stop asking whether we actually need them.

Advent gives us an opportunity to notice. Instead of automatically asking, “What do I want?”, we can practice asking:

- “What do I really need?”
- “What do I already have?”
- “Could I spend less?”
- “Who could benefit if I did?”

Simplicity creates room for generosity.

Generosity is more than Giving Away our Leftovers

Sometimes generosity means giving from what is extra. Jesus also shows us a deeper kind of generosity: sacrificial love. Paul describes Jesus this way: *“Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”* - 2 Corinthians 8:9
Jesus didn't love us from a safe distance. He gave himself.

That means Christian generosity can sometimes cost us something. We might give up something we could have purchased, enjoyed, or kept for ourselves. The question becomes not simply: “How much can I give without noticing?”...but “What could I willingly give up so that someone else can flourish?”

That's one reason we call this practice Redistribute. We aren't only adding another donation to our Christmas spending. We are intentionally changing some of our spending so that resources can move toward people experiencing greater need.

Generosity is Connected to Justice
The Bible repeatedly connects faithfulness to God with concern for people who are poor, vulnerable, or excluded.

The prophet Isaiah describes the kind of worship God desires: *"Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter?"* - Isaiah 58:7

And John writes: *"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"* - 1 John 3:17

Generosity isn't simply feeling sorry for someone. It means paying attention to our neighbor's well-being and asking how what God has entrusted to us might contribute to a more just and loving world.

- Sometimes love looks like sharing.
- Sometimes love looks like giving something up.
- Sometimes love looks like changing the way we live.

Redistribute at Home
Sometime during Advent, gather as a household and choose one thing you normally spend money on. It could be eating out, Christmas presents, entertainment, new clothes, stocking stuffers, decorations, coffee or treats, or another optional purchase. Then ask if we could spend less on this and Redistribute the difference?

- For example, maybe your household planned to spend $100 on something and decides to spend $60 instead. The other $40 can become an act of generosity.

For children, this can be very small. A child might choose one toy they don't need or give part of their allowance. The amount isn't the most important part. The practice is learning that we have choices about what we consume…and those choices can become love for our neighbors.

Around the Table
Choose a few questions to discuss together:

- What is something you are grateful to have?
- What makes it hard to be satisfied with what we already have?
- How do advertisements or Christmas traditions make us want more things?
- What is something you enjoy but don't actually need?
- What might it feel like to intentionally buy less?
- What could our household spend less on this Advent?
- Who might benefit from the money we don't spend?
- How can giving become joyful rather than something we do because we feel guilty?

There aren't perfect answers. The goal is to learn to notice together.

An Advent Experiment

During the weeks of Advent, whenever someone in your household wants to buy something that isn't necessary, pause before buying it and ask three questions:

- Do I need it?
- Can I enjoy what I already have?
- Could some of this money help someone else?

You might still decide to buy it. That's okay. The goal isn't to make buying things bad. The goal is to become people who are free enough to choose generosity rather than simply following every desire to consume.

At the end of Advent, talk about what you noticed.

A Prayer of Abundance

We know that we are cared for by an abundant Provider
Let us choose to be grateful and trusting

We know that we have enough and that what we need will always be provided.
Let us choose to be content and generous.

We know that our choices matter for ourselves, for others and for future generations.
Help us live consciously and creatively, celebrating the signs of your New Creation that is present and coming.

Creator, who made us to seek the greater good of your kingdom.
Guide us to spend our time, talents, and resources on what matters most.

Teach us to be free,
to live without worry, fear, or greed in the freedom of your abundance.

Give us our daily bread, as we share ours with the hungry.
We give you thanks for the precious gift of life!

- This prayer is taken from *Free: Spending Your Time and Money on What Matters Most* by Mark and Lisa Scandrette

Remember
Redistribute isn't about having the least. It's about learning what “enough” looks like so that we are free to share.

During Advent, we remember that Jesus came toward us in generous, sacrificial love.

Redistribute gives us a small, practical way to follow him by spending less, giving more, and seeking a world where our neighbors have what they need.