



Learning to Give

Ryan Felber, 2015-16 NBA XPLOR Resident in North Hollywood, CA

This year, 23 of us have committed to 10 months of simple living in NBA XPLOR—to a monthly stipend of \$475/month. Let me tell you, that doesn't go very far in Hollywood. And while, yes, my housing is taken care of, I still have expenses, and that money disappears quickly. And every month, as that money dwindles, I think of all the things I wanted to experience in California that I won't be able to afford.

Then something happens...something a little miraculous.

My roommates and I get a call with an invitation to Palm Springs for the weekend, or an email with a request for us to go to dinner at a nice restaurant, or a letter in the mail with movie passes. We get someone passing us an envelope at church with cash in it, or someone hands us a pan of food, or we hear that someone we barely know is planning a trip to Disneyland for us. We find ourselves being shown great hospitality and being welcomed as family by people who only know one thing about us: We came to serve.



So, instead of holding on to every cent because I don't have enough, I'm trying something else. Something I learned from my church family back home at Galileo Church in Texas:

**No matter how little you have,
you always have enough to give back.**

I'm living by the belief that, as Christians—or followers of Jesus, as someone told me recently they like to say—we are called to give without expectation of payback and without worry for tomorrow. We are called to give of ourselves because everything we have has been given to us. So while I don't make a lot of money, I know that I am called to give to causes I feel passionately about—whether that's Galileo's crowd-funded worship album, my church, or the AIDS Walk Los Angeles.

Scripture actually tells us that we are not to worry because we are loved and cared for. Well, I'm not great at the “not worrying” yet, but I'm trying to hold loosely what I have and give graciously to those in need. For you see, I was once in need, and someone gave to me; I was hungry, and somebody fed me; I was homeless, and I was sheltered; I was broken, and I was taken in and healed.

I have committed 10 months to service, simple living, and community, and because of that I am being blessed with opportunities that I could never afford on my own. That's pretty much the idea of the tithe, isn't it? That we are called to give first to Christ through the church, and then Christ through the church gives to us in ways we can't imagine.

NBA XPLOR is a 10-month service residency opportunity for young adults ages 21-30, with the purpose of empowering young adults to discern and develop a “heart for care” as they live together in simple community, engage in direct service and justice work, engage in leadership development, and discern their vocational calls to honor the various communities they are called to serve.

Learn more at nbacares.org/xplor.