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.

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