

“All the church ever talks about is money!”

You’ve heard statements like that before. You may even have said something like that before. Why? First, it’s simply not true. (It has been a few years since we’ve done a significant stewardship emphasis that encourages regular, weekly offerings at church.) Second, the statement is misleading: God wants a lot more than our money! He wants us to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The emphasis is not on money. It is on what is in our hearts.

Today, we will challenge our church family to give a tithe (10%) OR to increase the proportion of what they are giving for their weekly offerings for a period of ten weeks. Why? Our giving shows the Lord the honor, love, and gratitude we have for what Christ has done for us. Generous giving is one of the ways that faith-filled hearts respond to the riches of Christ. Giving is an act of worship. That’s the only reason we pass offering plates during church services.

The practice of tithing (giving 10%) is at least as old as Abraham (Genesis 14:20). In Old Testament Israel, tithing was commanded by law. In the New Testament Church, tithing—along with all other methods of giving—is inspired by the gospel of Christ. Many Christians, free from compulsion, tithe as an exercise of their faith. Does God really have the ability to keep us safe, warm and well-fed without 10% of our income? To share an even greater proportion of our income? Faith relishes the challenge. The Spirit is up to the task!

How is it possible to give something like the tithe—and do so freely and joyfully? Christ’s love empowers his people to give generously. It flows freely from Christ “*who loved us and gave himself up for us*” (Ephesians 5:2). Our generous giving to God is a response to Christ’s willing sacrifice for us.

Finally, tithing serves New Testament Christians as a benchmark for proportionate giving. The Apostle Paul said, “*...each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income*” (1 Corinthians 16:2). As New Testament Christians, tithing is a practice to be engaged in freely rather than a requirement to be met legally. Some of us are already in the spiritual habit of tithing. Inspired by God’s grace, we may seek to give more, more often, more creatively. For others, tithing will be a big step forward as well as a significant test of faith. For still others, because of life-issues known to God, the tithe might currently be unreachable. Then what about an extra percent, or two, or three? No matter where we find ourselves on the “giving spectrum,” this is true: Our trust in God’s goodness is well-placed! “*Now to Him Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us to Him be glory in all the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen*” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Starting now, consider this 10 for 10 stewardship challenge. For the next 10 weeks... through Easter, increase your offerings (to 10% of your income) if possible. It may not work for you but challenge yourself at some level. God will bless you, as you prayerfully consider what is doable for you. 10 weeks. See what happens. The chart on page 9 will show where you are and what you could do. It is just a guideline but somewhere to start.

May the Lord of the Church richly bless our church family as we seek to excel in the grace of giving!

In Christ,
Pastor Strong

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WEEKLY INCOME	BEYOND A TITHE		TITHE 10%	UPPER RANGE GIVING			MIDDLE RANGE GIVING			LOWER RANGE GIVING		
	15%	12%		9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$ 200	30.00	24.00	20.00	18.00	16.00	14.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	6.00	4.00	2.00
\$ 300	45.00	36.00	30.00	27.00	24.00	21.00	18.00	15.00	12.00	9.00	6.00	3.00
\$ 400	60.00	48.00	40.00	36.00	32.00	28.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	12.00	8.00	4.00
\$ 500	75.00	60.00	50.00	45.00	40.00	35.00	30.00	25.00	20.00	15.00	10.00	5.00
\$ 600	90.00	72.00	60.00	54.00	48.00	42.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	18.00	12.00	6.00
\$ 700	105.00	84.00	70.00	63.00	56.00	49.00	42.00	35.00	28.00	21.00	14.00	7.00
\$ 800	120.00	96.00	80.00	72.00	64.00	56.00	48.00	40.00	32.00	24.00	16.00	8.00
\$ 900	135.00	108.00	90.00	81.00	72.00	63.00	54.00	45.00	36.00	27.00	18.00	9.00
\$1,000	150.00	120.00	100.00	90.00	80.00	70.00	60.00	50.00	40.00	30.00	20.00	10.00
\$1,100	165.00	132.00	110.00	99.00	88.00	77.00	66.00	55.00	44.00	33.00	22.00	11.00
\$2,000	300.00	240.00	200.00	180.00	160.00	140.00	120.00	100.00	80.00	60.00	40.00	20.00
\$3,000	450.00	360.00	300.00	270.00	240.00	210.00	180.00	150.00	120.00	90.00	60.00	30.00

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE % would be for you.