

Practical Pastoral Advice on Giving and A Personal Giving Worksheet

By: Bart Garrett

Practical Pastoral Advice:

As a pastor I get this question a lot: “Where should I give my money? Why can’t I give it directly to those in need rather than to the church (you know, bypass the middle man)?”

For Katie and I, we strive to give first to the local church that we are currently involved in. We have made it a practice to attempt to give 1% higher each year. This is not a biblical principle and should never be submitted to legalistically. I don’t tell you this to bind your conscience; increasing by 1% is not something that everyone should do. However, Katie and I heard of a pastor and his wife who do this (Frank and Barbara Barker), and we liked the idea. For us, it mitigates the lean towards materialism and consumption in our culture, and as we grow older (and wiser), and have more discretionary income, well, it gives us the opportunity to give more of it away. I am not sure if the 10% tithe is an “air tight” case in Scripture—where it should go and exactly how much it should be. Yet, it does seem that Jesus talks about it in terms of it being the “bare-bones” minimum.

A lot of people point to Matthew 23:23 as the New Testament abrogation of the tithe. Jesus is speaking to his adversaries and he retorts: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” Folks are quick to say, “See, Jesus dismisses the tithe as insignificant—a new day has dawned—we need to care now about the big things like justice, mercy, and faithfulness.” This is true, but it is only a half-truth. Don’t miss what Jesus also said: “You should have practiced the latter, *without neglecting the former.*” Jesus recognizes that our checkbook remains a moral document. Remember, it was Jesus who said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” He means here that our affections usually follow our money, and not vice-versa!

Okay, so where do I give my tithe? Here is a practical principle to consider: There should be greater giving where there is greater personal accountability and commitment. The other ministries that you choose to give to are not nearly as accountable to you and for you as the one who is currently feeding and equipping you. Additionally, your church and its leaders have spent countless hours in prayer and planning in determining whom it is in your community that is in great need of financial partnership. Give to your local church first, and from there, as God blesses, expand and diversify your giving towards other areas of passion. Currently, we support four missionaries, Samaritan’s Purse, and two other church developers, but this we do, after we give to Christ Church.

Worksheet:

My Gross Annual Income Is \$_____

A Tithe (10%) Of This Income Is \$_____

My Offering Beyond The Tithe (above the 10%) Will Be \$_____

NOTE: Because giving is a regular, rhythm of worship, we recommend that you take this annual amount, divide it by 52, and plan to give on a weekly basis (1 Corinthians 16:2).

****Please note-** This is a private worksheet and is NOT to be turned in. The Pastoral Staff at Christ Church will not be aware of your specific financial contributions. Our bookkeeping is handled apart from the pastors’ direct involvement, and we are not privy to, nor desirous of, this information. It is our hope that we will be unhindered from caring for each parishioner with equal time and attention.