

CHRIST FELLOWSHIP'S VIEW GIVING

WHY DO WE GIVE?

1. We give generously out of gratitude because of what God has given us as the great giver. Jesus is our greatest model and motivation.

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

2. We give generously out of obedience because God tells us.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it” (Malachi 3:10).

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Luke 6:38).

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:2-7).

3. We give generously because of the blessings we receive from God.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).

HOW SHOULD WE GIVE?

1. We should give voluntarily.

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people (2 Corinthians 8:3b-4).

And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so (2 Corinthians 8:10).

2. We should give enthusiastically and joyfully.

They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people (2 Corinthians 8:4).

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given (2 Corinthians 9:5b).

3. We should give worshipfully.

And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us (2 Corinthians 8:5).

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the

gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else (2 Corinthians 9:11-13).

4. We should give sacrificially.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said: "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on" (Mark 12:41-44).

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:20-24).

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:32-37).

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE GIVE? ("3-P GIVING")

1. We should give Proportionately [kata dunamin]

Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you (Deuteronomy 16:17).

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set

aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

*For I testify that they gave as much as they were able [**kata dunamin**], and even beyond their ability [**para dunamin**]. Entirely on their own (2 Corinthians 8:3).*

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have (2 Corinthians 8:12).

It's not the portion but the proportion.

2. We should Plan our giving

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine (Proverbs 3:9-10).

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income (1 Corinthians 16:2a).

3. Our giving should be Progressive as we grow in the grace of giving

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How is giving related to worship and discipleship?

We believe giving to Christ's Church is an act of worship, and that both our attitude toward giving and our practice of generous giving indicates our level of

spiritual maturity and commitment to Christ's mission (Matthew 6:19-21). Faithful giving also makes us more generous overall, freeing us from the bonds of materialism, allowing us to better show Christ's love to a watching world, and providing a platform for further spiritual growth.

2. Is tithing a New Testament command applicable today?

In the Old Testament, the first reference to tithing is in Genesis where Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils from battle to the priest Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20). Later, Israelites were to give 10 percent of their income to God (Leviticus 27:30). In looking at the entire law, we see that they were to give a second tithe for personal travel and celebration and enjoyment before God (Leviticus 23:37-38), and then once every three years they were to give a third tithe for the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow (Deuteronomy 26:12). Therefore, in total they were to give 23.3 percent of their income annually. In addition, faithful Jews paid a temple tax (Matthew 17:24), and there were occasional special offerings such as to build or repair the temple (1 Chronicles 29:2-9), or as in the New Testament, to meet special needs in the church body (Acts 4:34-35).

In the New Testament we are told to give regularly, in proportion to our income and to excel in generosity (1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8-9). At times, we are to give sacrificially beyond what it seems we are able to give as we are blessed and as we grow in the grace of generosity (Mark 12:41-44).

3. Must a person give to their local church or can they give to other organizations and even their family in need instead?

First, the church is unique in that it is the only God-ordained institution today outside of the institutions of marriage and the family. Thus it should gain our full support. It is the temple of the Spirit, the body of Christ and the family of the Father (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Second, we should support those who teach us and bless us. It's our gifts that provide for those who minister at preaching, teaching and leading. If we are blessed to be part of a local church, it is our obligation to financially support that church as members of that body (Romans 15:27).

Third, biblically we are to care for our families by meeting their financial needs (1 Timothy 5:8), and to take care of widows (1 Timothy 5:16). By analogy, while it is good to give to other organizations, our first responsibility is to our own local church and to our own family.

In short, each believer should fully support their own local church before giving to other organizations or needs. A good rule of thumb would be to give at least 10 percent to your own local church and provide for your family financially before considering contributing to an outside organization. Giving to other needs, even in one's immediate family, does not remove the obligation to support your local church.

For more information on this subject, see Bruce B. Miller's written message, *Stewardship, Matthew 25:14-30* (1.7.2007).

*Christ Fellowship's views on this subject are guided by the authoritative Word of God.
Not all biblical references in the Word of God relating to each principle are listed.
Biblical references quoted are from the New International Version (NIV) 2011 unless otherwise noted.*