

Why Give?



A PERSPECTIVE ON GIVING
FROM THE SESSION



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

To give of our lives and property to God is not only a commanded duty but a gracious privilege. The Scriptures describe this offering as a beautiful mark of God's grace in our lives in the following ways.

THE SCRIPTURES TEACH:

1. GOD IS THE CREATOR AND OWNER OF EVERYTHING AND CALLS US TO LIVE AS HIS GENEROUS STEWARDS OR MANAGERS.

We are created for God's glory and designed to reflect his image, but as sinners we need to be redeemed and then remade into the likeness of Christ. These gracious acts of God actually free us to increasingly obey and then to give more back to God out of all that we have been given.

2. GOD COMMANDS US TO TITHE FOR HIS GLORY AND OUR GOOD.

The giving of one tenth of our income is commanded by God to continually reshape our lives as stewards, not owners, of all that we are and have. Tithing liberates us from the enslaving tendency to love created things more than the Creator and Redeemer. When we offer the tithe and offering to our God and King, any bondage of entitlement is challenged by this act of obedience—an act rooted in the joy of our salvation.

3. THOUGH TITHING IS A FIRST AND FAITHFUL STEP TOWARDS GENEROUS LIVING, IT IS NOT THE FINAL OR ULTIMATE ACT.

Giving one tenth of our income is clearly a beginning and not a fulfillment of our faithful response to God's grace and command. Freely we have received from our King, so freely we give to him and his purposes on earth. The Old Testament (Numbers 18:11-18, 21-29; Deuteronomy 12:10-18, 14:28-29; Leviticus 19:9-10;

Exodus 25:1-2, 36:2-7) explicitly calls God's people to give above the tithe; the New Testament (2 Corinthians 8-9) prescribes heart-motivated sacrifice as normative. Such generosity was designed to truly be delightful for the people of God.

4. THE LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD RECEIVE GIVING PRIORITY AMONG BELIEVERS.

With today's multiple giving options, we take the position that the priority of our giving should be to the local church and secondarily to other Christ-honoring causes and organizations.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR THE ABOVE FOUR POINTS:

1. Colossians 3:17,23-24; Matthew 10:8; Luke 6:38
2. Amos 4:4; Deuteronomy 26:12-15; Leviticus 27:30; Matthew 23:23
3. 2 Corinthians 8-9
4. Malachi 3:6-13; I Peter 2:4-5

SCRIPTURAL OVERVIEW TO FURTHER EXPLAIN THESE FOUR POINTS:

The Scriptures answer these foundational questions: Why not simply be philanthropic or generous? Why give to the church?

In the Old Testament, God designed the temple as the sanctuary for entering and enjoying God's presence on earth. The temple was the place where people met God. At the temple and through the priests God communicated his Word to his people, the people offered sacrifices to God confessing their sins with hope of atonement, and the people worshipped God with an apprehension of his holiness and nearness.

If one wanted to be made right with God in the Old Testament, one would go to the temple. Thus, the prophets

speak of all the nations being drawn to the one true God by coming to the temple. So, when Malachi speaks of bringing the whole tithe to the temple storehouse, he speaks of a room in the temple designated for the storage of gifts for temple ministry. Through these gifts, the ongoing work of the temple for the glory of God among the nations would continue and prosper.

Because of the incarnation and work of Jesus Christ, the church is now the temple on earth where people meet God, hear him communicate his Word, worship him in his holiness and nearness in the Spirit and have sure atonement announced in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus.

No longer are the nations to come to the temple. But instead, as Matthew writes in his Gospel, the church now takes in the reality of "God with us" to the nations by "going and making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 1:23, 28:19-20)

As G.K. Beale notes, "Our task as the covenant community, the church, is to be God's temple, so filled with his glorious presence that we expand and fill the earth with that presence until God finally accomplishes this goal completely at the end of time." This is our mission. And thus, we believe tithes should come into the storehouse of the temple, God's church, as we labor to spread his glory on the mountain, in the city, around the world and among the nations.

United with you for God's glory,
The elders of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church