

# What The Bible Says About Tithing For The New Testament Church



## Some altered Old Testament laws and practices

Some laws and practices mentioned in the Old testament have been altered in the New Testament. They include:

1. Tithing (giving a tenth of your earnings to the levitical priests in the Jewish temple)
2. Sabbath worship (gathering to worship on Saturday, with strict penalties for anyone doing any kind of physical labor on that day)

## Why is tithing no longer binding?

### Christ taught us to practice the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law

We see this idea stated in the sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5:21 - "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Matthew 5:27 - "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

## Tithing can lead to legalism

Strict adherence to a system of tithing can cause a person to become legalistic in their thinking and cause them to assume that they have done their duty to God and to the local church just because they gave their 10 percent. But do we really think that we can get away with thinking:

"I gave MY tithe! ... (So I don't need to witness. Let the church use my tithe to support evangelism and missionaries.)"

OR

"I gave MY tithe! ... (So I don't need to worry about the family in my church who is struggling to feed their children or pay their rent.)"

We see a famous example of this problem (i.e. of tithing contributing to a legalistic self-righteous attitude) in the Gospel of Luke:

Luke 18:11-12 - "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, **I give tithes of all that I possess.**"

### **Tithing can easily promote hypocrisy**

We see in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke how tithing promoted hypocrisy that the Lord openly condemned:

Matthew 23:23 - "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **ye pay tithe** of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Luke 11:42 - "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for **ye tithe** mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

God is by no means pleased by the man who faithfully gives his tithe and yet still gives in to the lusts of his flesh, be it pornography, cigarettes, booze, gluttony, materialism, or what have you. He is not happy with us for giving ten percent of our earnings when we could be giving twenty. Nor is He happy with us when we give twenty percent and yet never stick our necks out for the sake of the Gospel. Also, I do not believe that God is pleased when we simply write checks to charities that we really know little about. God would have us get involved in the lives of the people in the local church so that when we give, we will know that the needs are genuine and so that we can truly be our brother's keeper. Remember, we are to strive to enter in by the narrow gate (Luke 13:24) and we are to run the race as to win the prize (1Cor 9:24), and we are to be good stewards of ALL that God has blessed us with.

### **God tells us that everything we have is from Him**

1 Corinthians 4:7 - "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and **what hast thou that thou didst not receive?** now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

### **God tells us that we are to give according to the needs of local church**

We see in Acts chapter 2 that believers gave as every man had need (with no

mention of a tithe):

Acts 2:44 - "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, **as every man had need.**"

Notice that in verse 45 it does not say that they sold ALL their possessions, as some cult leaders would have you believe. However, if there was a need, and someone could meet that need by selling their possessions, they did so. In America, we are so blessed financially that many of us could afford to give far more than 10 percent of our incomes to the local body of believers and towards the promotion of the Gospel. But all too often, we use our surplus on ourselves to buy things that we could easily do without. That should not be. May God help us to give more often and to give in a truly sacrificial manner, setting aside our own needs so that we can be a blessing to others. Also, when we give, we should not give in ignorance - we should make sure that the needs are not due to bad spending habits and such. When a family is having financial problems and are also spending money foolishly, other members of the church should set aside time to instruct the family in proper money management. Teach them how to setup a budget, discuss tips for making economical purchases, have a garage sale, send a teenager out to work (baby sitting, paper route, etc.), look for odd jobs, sell expensive possessions that are non-essential, and so forth.

## **What is the purpose of financial giving?**

We no longer have a levitical priesthood to support or a temple to fund. However, the local pastor has taken over for the priests and the local church building has taken the place of the temple in terms of entities requiring financial support. But is this biblical? When we look at the patterns in the Bible for the early church, we notice that Paul did everything possible to avoid being a financial burden to anyone. In fact, shouldn't a church leader set the example for minimizing the burden they are on others? We also see that believers in the early church met in homes (Rom 16:5, 1Cor 16:19, Col 4:15, Phm 1:2) so there was no burden associated with financing and running a building. Whatever money was collected from the church was required just to meet the very basic needs of believers. We, the modern-day church, have created a financial yoke, an unbiblical yoke for the local body of believers that should not exist. Just think of all the resources we would have at our disposal to support evangelism and missionaries if we would do away with the unbiblical practice of buying and building large temples of worship - financial "black holes" that make it more difficult for brothers and sisters in Christ to use their finances to support the truly needy families in the local church. Perhaps if more churches had the proper biblical approach as to where to direct finances, we would not have so many families concerned about how many children they can afford. The local church was meant to be a family and a ministering agency for its members, not a corporation or a real estate investment. When we come to realize that, then we will better understand the

whole issue of church finances.

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