

A Blueprint for Tithing

“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

It's not a surprise. Every year at stewardship time, usually in the fall, the pastors preach on giving, and congregations predictably give the same amount they gave the year before. Extolling the command to tithe from Malachi and other places in the Bible, many pastors focus on legalism and obedience.

The problem is, today's world is a place where people lift up freedom, individuality, and lack of accountability, and the church is beginning to take her cue from the world. This call back to faithfulness and the miraculous life which can result from it may be something which will help the church rise again to its leadership role. A blueprint for tithing will help the church fall to her knees, rise in obedience, and once more be a lighthouse for salvation to all people near and far.

Denominational statistics paint a sad picture of churchwide giving in today's world. If our goal is for all to tithe at least ten percent, look at what was happening just a few years ago.

When law enforcement tries to find criminals, the first principle is to follow the money. If we want to see the healthiness of the church today, we must take a look at where the money is or is not.

The Christian Reformed Church members, in 2013, gave an average of 6.1 of their incomes to the church. That's significantly less than the biblical "tithe" (tenth). But it's dramatically higher than other Protestant denominations' giving. In its most recent survey, the giving research firm empty tomb inc. found that members in eight other denominations belonging to the National Association of Evangelicals gave, on average, 3.7 percent of their income. Denominations belonging to the National Council of Churches did even worse, with members giving 2.6 percent. ~Christianity Today, October 2013.

The pulpiteers must return to showing that when we give we find joy and life we never new possible. We must lift up God's principle of tithing, giving ten percent or more, sometimes other amounts as we are blessed with income from sale of a business, success in the stock market, or an unexpected gift from a friend. Tithing is not an option, it is a principle to be risen to and surpassed as the Christian grows and realizes that the church is the first place ten percent of their money and a hundred percent of their commitment goes.

Sadly, the tithe in many cases is in the few lives of the most committed. People who began tithing as children have no problem tithing as adults. It is not about the amount, it is about the percentage. But we must start early, or we will miss much.

"I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I ever made," wrote John D. Rockefeller, "if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 per week."

We must be experimenters and pioneers of giving as individual church members, to be able to use the tithe as a measurement of our faithfulness, to see if we want to retain control of all we have, which was entrusted to us by God, or give it to God. And the churches must be faithful to look beyond their walls for ministry opportunities as they receive it.

"What percentage should you give? I tell people to start with 10 percent because the Bible writers have a lot to say about the tithe, which means, "tenth." For some people, that's extremely uncomfortable. But so is a colonoscopy, and those save countless lives."~[Andy Stanley](#)

We must lead by example, and pass down the secret of commitment and faith growth to the next generations, realizing that tithing does not stop with money, but only provides an example of how we must spend our time and energy for God rather than ourselves.

Jeffrey Holland entreats us this way. "Teach your children that many of the blessings of the Church are available to them because you and they give tithes and offerings to the Church. Teach them that those blessings could come virtually no other way."

The tithe is God's historical principle, a blueprint for faith, a simple measurement to get us on the path of giving and faith. Both are tied together. Start with where you are, if you dare, and move up by percentage points in attendance, giving, and prayer, and there is no limit to the wonder and grace you will find.

"I have yet to find," Gordon Hinckley says, "a faithful tithe payer who cannot testify that in a very literal and wonderful way the windows of Heaven have been opened and blessings have been poured out upon him or her."