

TITHES & OFFERINGS

AT THE RED DOOR COMMUNITY CHURCH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to clarify how we at Red Door understand what the Bible teaches on the topic of tithing and also more broadly on the topic of financial giving in general.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of tithing is one that can often be a point of contention within the Church. The array of responses to the question **“are Christians required to tithe?”** is vast and varied.

Our mission statement at Red Door is “To see His Kingdom come and His will done on earth as it is in heaven by making disciples.” What is a disciple? One who trusts Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of their life, and one who has committed to following Jesus with a desire and intent to become more like Him.

In light of this, perhaps a better question to ask would be **“will tithing help me to follow Jesus and, will tithing help me to become more like Jesus?”** To that question, we would answer a resounding “Yes!” Tithing when done with the right heart and understanding is an incredibly powerful discipline that allows money to become an instrument for our transformation rather than something that corrupts, enslaves and deforms us.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to clarify how we at Red Door understand what the Bible teaches on the topic of tithing and also more broadly on the topic of financial giving in general.

In summary what we believe and practice is that:

- Tithing is something that should be practiced by followers of Jesus but not something that has to be practiced in order to be a Christian.
- The tithe should be the starting point for Christian giving, as Jesus and the New Testament writers clearly emphasise a call to extravagant generosity - far beyond the 10% guideline - for those who are under grace, compelled by grace, saved by grace, and empowered by grace.
- The indisputable teaching of scripture is that followers of Jesus are to be generous, sacrificial and cheerful givers of their money because this is what honours God, forms us into Christ-likeness, protects our hearts against the corrupting power of money and greed, and is what witnesses to the watching world the heart and character of God.

A more detailed explanation of tithes and offerings is as follows.

WHAT IS TITHING?

The term "tithe" means "a tenth part," referring to giving 10% of your income to God. The first instance of tithing in Scripture appears in Genesis 14, where Abraham gives a tithe to the high priest Melchizedek. Later, in Leviticus, tithing is established as part of God's covenant with His people, requiring them to give a tenth of their crops, herds, and flocks (Leviticus 27:30–32).

Additional Old Testament teachings reveal the dual purpose of tithing: honouring God as the provider and owner of all things and supporting the ministry of the Levites. **Thus, tithing has always been an act of worship and a means of sustaining God's work.**

Deuteronomy 14:23 further clearly states a purpose of tithing: “that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always.”

The Old Testament also underscores how seriously God views tithing when in Malachi 3 God

condemns the Israelites for robbing Him by withholding tithes and offerings, urging them to bring the full tithe into the storehouse (Malachi 3:8–10).

Tithing in the New Testament

Under the new covenant, some argue that tithing is no longer required—and in a sense, they are correct. Being in right relationship with God depends solely on faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, not adherence to the Law. However, Jesus clarified that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfil it. In the Sermon on the Mount, He consistently raised the standard, calling His followers to live in ways that go beyond what the Law required, not below it. Importantly, He empowers us by His grace to meet these higher expectations.

The New Testament emphasises giving that is sacrificial and generous: “as [we] are able, and even beyond [our] ability” (2 Corinthians 8:3). In this light, the tithe—10%—is often viewed as a baseline for Christian giving. Jesus affirmed this principle when addressing the Pharisees, stating that while they should prioritise justice, mercy, and faithfulness, they were right not to neglect tithing: “You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former” (Matthew 23:23).

Far from abolishing the tithe, Jesus placed greater emphasis on sacrificial giving. The tithe remains a foundational guideline, but the generosity of a Christian under grace should far exceed it, reflecting a heart transformed by God’s abundant grace.

OFFERINGS - GOING BEYOND THE TITHE

Some think that because they give a tenth of their income to the church they then have the other 90% to spend on themselves. The bottom line with all our wealth and possessions is that none of it belongs to us. It all belongs to God. Scriptures tells us that the earth and everything in it belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). We are not owners. We are stewards. We have been entrusted with gifts and talents and resources and we have been entrusted with these things to use them in a way that would honour God and advance his Kingdom. This principal is seen in the Parable of Talents (Matthew 25).

Therefore, we are all to be mindful of stewarding well what God has blessed us with and our giving should never be limited to 10%. The tithe is Gods. It is what we bring to His house to honour Him. The other 90% we use and we give according to how He has blessed us and how He is leading us.

PRINCIPLE OF THE FIRST FRUITS

Proverbs 3:9-10 says: Honour 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.

The principle of giving God our “firstfruits” is another helpful and essential practice in how to understand and practice the giving of money in the form of tithes and offerings. This principle is how our giving goes beyond mere discipline and wise practice to, the deeper and more formational place of worship. While tithing is helpful in guiding how much we give, practicing the principle of the firstfruits helps us establish the right posture and attitude our giving.

The principle of the firstfruits is a biblical concept that emphasises giving to God the first and best portion of what we receive as an act of worship, gratitude, and trust in His provision. It reflects the acknowledgment that everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him.

Key Aspects of the Principle of Firstfruits:

- Honouring God with the first and best - the principle calls believers to dedicate the initial portion of their income, harvest, or resources to God as a way to honour Him.
- Acknowledging God's ownership - giving the firstfruits recognises that God is the ultimate provider and owner of all things. By offering the first portion, we affirm that everything we have is a gift from God.
- Demonstrating faith and trust - offering the firstfruits requires faith, as it involves giving to God before meeting one's own needs. It reflects trust that God will provide for the rest of one's needs.
- Application for believers today - while the Old Testament practice of firstfruits was tied to agricultural produce, the principle remains applicable for Christians. It encourages believers to prioritise God in their finances, giving the first portion of their income to Him before addressing other needs.
- A heart of generosity - the firstfruits principle is ultimately about the posture of the heart. It fosters a spirit of generosity and keeps God at the centre of one's life, demonstrating that He is the priority.

SOME FINAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE GIVING OF OUR FINANCES

2 Corinthians 9:7

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.

Give generously

Consider 2 Corinthians 8-9. If you want to grasp giving, read those chapters and read them again. Not just the "God loves the cheerful giver" section, but the whole thing. The Macedonians gave generously, "beyond their means," and begged earnestly for "the favour" of doing so. This is radical giving that is a right and reasonable response for all that God has done, is doing and will do for us.

Give cheerfully

There is a reward for giving, but it is dependent upon a heart free from a lust for the temporal rewards of this earth (Matt.6:1-4). Gospel giving is cheerful and voluntary because it trusts that every deposit into the kingdom will earn eternal interest. If you can't give cheerfully, give anyway (don't compound your internal sin with external sin), but as you do, confess your struggle, seek clarity on the 'disconnect' between your heart and the gospel, pray for joy, and walk in repentance.

Give sacrificially

This is probably the most under-appreciated and under-applied principle for Christian giving today. It inconveniences us, and the flesh is quick to offer excuses and justification, but the gospel calls us to deep and radical sacrifice. In 1 John 3:16-17, the apostle exhorts the Church to care for brothers in need as an overflow and implication of gospel love, the type of love that lays down one's life for another. Do we actually give to the point that we feel it and the feeling stings? Does the call to take up our cross (Matt. 16:24-26) not also carry the charge to lay down our wealth and possessions?

Give regularly

Though we should give as need arises, we should also be consistent and disciplined in giving and this is where the principle of tithing is a helpful discipline and practice. Giving is linked with prayer and fasting (Matt. 6:1-18), and both should contain some element of discipline and regularity. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the apostle Paul explicitly commends a disciplined and orderly form of giving, in addition to whatever spontaneous offerings and gifts we might be compelled to give.

Give secretly

The flesh craves the praise of man, and thus we need to beware the hypocrisy and tendency to give in an effort to purchase the acclaim, attention and affection of others (Matt. 6:2-4).

Give thankfully

Grace is the basis for gratitude. As those who have received grace, we should gratefully extend it to others.

Give spontaneously

A heart freed by the gospel does not wait for opportunities to give. It intentionally seeks them out. Gospel giving looks for chances to bless others and listens to the needs of those near and far. Gospel generosity gives to those who beg (Matt. 5:42), risking the gift might not be used properly (which is not to say that it is not righteous and wise to occasionally withhold support for some greater purpose). Those walking in the light of the gospel engage in good deeds and meet pressing needs anytime and anywhere they arise.



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