

Biblical Stewardship

Adapted from Pastor Sam's 2019 report for the annual congregational meeting.

According to God's Word, we need each other as a body of believers. God has called you to salvation and eternal life in Christ, and God has called you to be part of this congregation. In **1 Cor. 12**, Paul makes an analogy that the individual believers in the city of Corinth are part of the Body of Christ. Each individual as part of that body has a calling, vocation, and function to play. The foot needs the hand; the ear needs the eye; and so on (**12:14-19**).


Christian stewardship begins with the premise set forward in **1 Tim. 6:7**, "for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." Because everything we have – our time, talents, and treasures – is God's, we should use everything we have for God's purposes knowing that God will never fail to take care of us (**Mt. 6:25-34**).


Throughout the years, many have faithfully served the congregation with their time to the benefit of the whole body of believers here at Christ the King. Some of the areas of service are very noticeable, but some are less so. Please know that every way in which you contribute your time to the congregation is appreciated. Even simply being here Sunday mornings is rendering a faithful service to the body of Christ (**Heb. 10:23-24**). God sees the ways in which you serve, and He will say to you on the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant. As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (**Mt. 25:21, 40**).

As different parts of the body, each of you have different talents to contribute to the edification of the congregation. For some, those talents keep the building running properly and make our property look good. For others, those talents are math, accounting, overseeing, administrating, teaching, praying, encouraging, strengthening, serving, etc. And for others, those talents are artistic, public reading, and musical. We need each of you!

Just as we are stewards of the time and talents that God has given to us, we are also stewards of the treasures God has given to us. In the Old Testament, God commanded that the Israelites give 10% of their goods to support the Temple, the priests and Levites, and the sacrifices (**Lev. 27-30** and **Num. 18:21, 25-26**). And God invited His people to bring in their full tithes and watch as He blessed them (**Mal. 3:10**). There are two teachings prevalent in many churches today that are in error when it comes to Christians and tithing. Those errors are: 1) Tithing is still a command of God upon us who share in the New Testament ministry of God, and 2) if you do tithe, God will bless you financially; if you don't tithe, God will punish you.

Addressing the first error: Christ has fulfilled all the Old Testament laws regarding the Temple and priesthood (**Col. 2:16-17**). Just as Christians are not obligated to abstain from wearing cloths made of two different types of material (**Lev. 19:19**), Christians are not obligated to tithe. Addressing the second error: To say that God will bless or curse us based on our actions is to make all of God's work dependent upon us which denies the cross of Christ. So, the Old Testament laws about tithing have been fulfilled, but that does not mean that Scripture has nothing to say about us New Testament Christians and giving.

 **1 Corinthians 16:2a** – On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper.

 **2 Corinthians 9:6–8** – The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

From these texts, we see that Christians are to give:

- 1) **Voluntarily and cheerfully.** Giving should *not* be done under compulsion or grudgingly. Giving is God's gracious call to join Him in His work.
- 2) **Our firstfruits.** Giving should be from the firstfruits of our labor. Our giving is what we do on *the first day* of the week before our other expenses come due.
- 3) **Proportionately.** Giving is not be an arbitrarily set dollar amount each week. Instead, it is to be in accordance with how we have prospered each week. In other words, setting a certain proportion (percentage) of our income for the work of God through the Church.
- 4) **Faithfully.** We have God's promise that He will take care of all our needs in this body and life. As we give, we are trusting God to keep that promise.

With all of that in mind, here is some practical advice on how to determine what you can contribute to the work of the Church.

- 1) **Receive God's gifts.** If you have not been faithfully attending worship to hear God's Word, receiving His forgiveness, and partaking of His Body and Blood for the eternal benefit of your soul, repent and come receive God's gifts. God does not want your money – He wants you, all of you!
- 2) **Pray.** Ask God for strength to follow Him faithfully in *all* areas of your life.
- 3) **Consider what the Church does.** The Church is called to spread the Gospel by preaching the Gospel to all who will hear it. You are part of that Church.
- 4) **Examine yourself.** Consider how you have supported the ministry in the past. Look at your previous year's giving to the congregation and compare it to your income. Ask yourself, "What percentage of my income did I give to the congregation last year?"
- 5) **Decide on your proportion.** Consider what proportion of your income you can give faithfully, proportionally, and – most importantly – *cheerfully*. Maybe it is 10%. Maybe it is 5%. Or, maybe, it is 1%. Whatever it is, know that God will bless your gift and use it for His purposes.

I praise God for all His provisions of time, talent, and treasures for our congregation through your generosity in the past. And I am excited to see what God is going to do through us in the future.