

How Much Should I Give?

Q - I feel a call to give more money to the Church, but I don't know where to start? How much do I give? To whom? Help me out here!

A - Thanks for the questions. Stewardship of our resources is something that many struggle with. Let me start with some principles that may help:

1. We are owners of nothing except our own free will. All other gifts, talents, things, relationships, etc. are gifts from God that we are given for a short time to take care of.
2. We will be held accountable for our stewardship by God.
3. Tithing and stewardship are about faith not money.
4. Your perceived needs may not match the reality of your needs.
5. We are either tippers or tithers. Tippers believe God exists to serve us. Tithers believe we exist to serve God.

These principles can help us to rightly order our giving. There is no mandate by the Church that you have to give a certain percentage. The Biblical model is 10% of gross income as demonstrated by the following passage (as well as others):

"Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering.'" - Numbers 18:26

The Church isn't caught up in the percent as much as what is happening in the heart. Paul tells us:

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." - 1 Cor 16:2

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Cor 9:7

My own recommendation is that you start with a certain percent (say 5%) of whatever gross income you receive (include any money you receive in support of your expenses). Then set up a different account as a tithing account. Do nothing with this money but give it away. Give half of the % you are putting away to the parish you attend and the other half to other reputable charities and missions.

Continue to up the percent as long as you can do so until you reach the Biblical model of 10%.

Remember that faith is certainly required and that prayer should always accompany all of these acts of charity and that all these recommendations are merely guidelines. Some give away much more than 10%, some less.

God is always pleased with a good steward of his creation. The Catechism even defines a Christian based on the principle of stewardship.

| *“A Christian is a steward of the Lord's goods.” (CCC, 952)*

I hope this helps.