



THE BIBLE ON GIVING

Imagine God calling together a group of people and asking them this question: "How would you advise me on financing my work in your world?" (Yes, it's a ridiculous scenario, but give it a try.)

- One fellow says, "Well, I think you should avoid pressuring people. You should encourage them to give, and teach them to give, but not twist their arms using guilt or emotional manipulation."
- Another says, "I think you should be fair about it; find a way for everyone to make an equal sacrifice."
- A young college student disagrees: "No, I think those who have been given more should be expected to give more."
- A retired gentleman offers this: "It would be nice if you could promise to reward them in some way for their generosity."
- A teenager asks, "Is there any way you could make giving fun - not like a duty, but something enjoyable?"
- A school teacher counters with this: "But what's so bad about duty? I think duty can be a very positive motivation."
- A business owner suggests, "I think you should have people be organized about it. They should give every week, or every two weeks."
- A quiet woman speaks up: "You should give people some priority guidelines - like start with their own local church, and then go beyond that to other organizations or projects."
- A person who never attends church offers this: "I wish that you would get the members of the church to give as a habit, so that when people like me come in, we don't have to be pressured for money. Then, if we decide to stay, we can get on board too."

It takes money...

What advice would you give? It takes money to keep a church going and growing - money to pay rents and mortgages, money for paper and postage, money for computers and copiers, money for salaries and charities. A church that doesn't care enough to give probably won't go very far ... and you'll probably agree, that's how it should be.

Generosity, sacrifice, commitment, caring ... they aren't just financial issues; they're spiritual issues too. That's why money management with a spiritual dimension - often called Christian stewardship - is an important dimension of spiritual growth. As we face this issue, most of us discover that we're more materialistic than we'd like to admit.

Jesus said it pretty straight: "You can't serve God and money," and "Where your treasure is, there your heart is also."

At Parkview Christian Church we ask our members to be highly committed financially so that our needs are met without having to pressure people or barrage them with emergency appeals. We're all in this together, and we believe God can do great things with people who are learning how to give.

Biblical Background

Jesus loved to tell stories about people handling money. (Scripture references are provided so you can look them up on your own.) Again, according to Jesus, giving wasn't an "unspiritual" subject, but rather our spirituality is very strongly connected to our generosity (Luke 16:10-13; Luke 12:13-21; Matthew 6:19-21, 24-34). The apostle Paul also frequently addressed our attitudes towards money and giving (1 Timothy 6:8-10, 17-19), and the early church set a wonderful example for us in generous living (Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-37). The Old Testament is similarly full of timeless financial wisdom with great relevance for us today - especially those of us who feel unable to give because we haven't learned to manage their finances wisely (Deuteronomy 8:10-18, Proverbs 6:6-11, Proverbs 28:20, Proverbs 21:25-26, 22:7, Proverbs 22:26-27).

Summary

Taken together, the Biblical pattern for giving fulfills all of the common-sense suggestions raised in our imaginary scenario above. In summary, according to Scripture, committed Christians give:

GRATEFULLY... They know that God is the source and ultimate owner of all they have anyway. They are so grateful for his provision that they give as a way of saying "Thank you!" (2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Proverbs 3:9-10)

SACRIFICIALLY... They understand that Christ gave himself for us, and so they joyfully present all they are and have back to God as a "living sacrifice." They learn to "give until it hurts" and then give a little more ... until it feels good! (Romans 12:1-2, 8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9)

PROPORTIONALLY... They try to give as high a percentage of their income as possible, recognizing that 100% of what they earn and have is a gift from God, and seeing the tithe (10%) as a long-established Biblical benchmark which may well be exceeded as they prosper. (Genesis 14:18-20; Leviticus 27:30,32; Malachi 3:8-10, Luke 14:33, 2 Corinthians 8:13 - 15)

REGULARLY... As resources flow in, they offer the "first-fruits" back to God, desiring to honor God with a portion of all they earn. They don't just give on occasional impulse, but instead, giving for them is a regular, planned part of their budgeting process. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Proverbs 3:9-10)

LOCALLY... Knowing that they claim this church as their spiritual home, they support the church staff and programs from which they derive benefit. (1 Timothy 5:17-18, 1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

GENEROUSLY... As they are able, they contribute to the cause of Christ at a community and global level with the possessions and money that God has entrusted to them. Inspired by both the example of Christ and the greatness of needs around them, they don't hold back. (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

CHEERFULLY... They give their offering not just to an organization, but rather to God - and they give willingly, and not under compulsion, but with a spirit of joyful worship as their resources flow out to serve others. Knowing that God gives so extravagantly to them and will provide for them, they seek to follow His example and want to give willingly. (2 Corinthians 9:5-7)

EXPECTANTLY... Counting on God's promise of provision, they anticipate seeing God work in their own lives-including financially-as they give. They see giving not as a "loss," but rather as a "gain." (Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6-14, Malachi 3:8-10)

Request and Challenge

If Parkview Christian Church is your church home, we hope that you will look at your income, and make a decision on a regular percentage to give weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc. Although we do not present the 10% giving level (tithing) as a requirement or burden, we recommend it as a benchmark and goal for committed members of the Parkview community. If you feel unable or not ready to give at that level, we encourage you to start at a level you feel good about (perhaps 3% or 5% or 7%) and then increase it as you are able. We believe that giving is an important part of our worship and discipleship as Christians.

Our finances are handled according to professional standards and are overseen by our Elders and Management Team (MT), which carefully prepares and monitors our budgets each year. If you have questions about our finances, please contact Wayne Krahn, the MT member who serves as our financial officer at Wayne.Krahn@parkviewchurch.com or 708-478-7477, Ext. 205.