

Tithes and Offerings

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God has commanded his children to “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Such a commandment prepares us for life in the eternities through trust in the Lord, personal sacrifice, and gratitude. One way of expressing gratitude to the Lord is through the paying of tithes and offerings.

Scriptural History of Tithing

The principle and commandment of tithing is found in both the Old and New Testament where Abraham and Jacob willingly gave one-tenth of their increase as an offering (Hebrews 7:1–10; Genesis 28:20–22). The book of Leviticus provides details on how such offerings were made before the time of Christ, including the giving of prized animals and crops prior to meeting our own needs (Leviticus 27:30–32). Christ identified the significance of the widow’s tithing as an example of this important principle (Mark 12, verses 41 to 44).

Malachi 3:8–9 from the Old Testament reads: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” The stern nature of this scripture suggests the Lord is not pleased when his children hold back the financial blessings he has bestowed upon them—even to the point of inferring that those who do so are robbing Him. By not tithing we literally rob God.

Tithing is a Commandment in our Day

In these latter days the commandment of tithing has been fully restored and reinforced as the Lord revealed to the prophet Joseph Smith: “This shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people. And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever” (D&C 119:3–4).

Tithing is not only a commandment, it is an opportunity to demonstrate our faithfulness to the Lord. Such faithfulness should be shown willingly, as the apostle Paul taught: “Let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Stephen L. Richards taught, “When one pays his tithing without enjoyment he is robbed of a part of the blessing. He must learn to give cheerfully, willingly and joyfully, and his gift will be blessed” (Stephen L. Richards, *The Law of Tithing* [pamphlet]. 1983], 8).

Other Types of Offerings to the Lord

Besides tithing there are other opportunities to give charity to those in need, helping to build the kingdom of God on earth.

Fast Offerings

Fast offerings can be made on a regular basis following the regular monthly fast of two meals. The money saved from those two meals, and any generous additions to that offering, are given and used to provide for the temporal needs of the poor.

Missionary Funds

Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ across the globe requires resources over and above that of tithing. Christians are able to contribute to missionary efforts both locally and internationally.

Special Offerings

There are regular opportunities to contribute money to special funds for third world education, humanitarian aid, and to make scriptures available for those who cannot otherwise afford, or for those who require the scriptures in a more convenient fashion (military, etc.).

Service

Members can also offer their time, talents, skills, and other goods to help others.

The Blessings of Tithing

While giving is an act of faith out of our love for God and for others by which we benefit spiritually, the Lord goes one step further and promises to bless us for our sacrifices. The Lord said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith ... if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). These blessings can be both material and spiritual and validate the promise made by the Lord the scripture quoted earlier from Matthew 6:33—that all of these things will be added unto you.

Conclusion

Some Christians unfortunately view tithing as a way for greedy preachers and mega churches to line their own pockets for the benefit of a chosen few. Although this has surely happened before, and is likely to happen in the future with some churches run by wicked individuals, it doesn't mean that we as Christians forgo the counsel of the Lord regarding tithing. The scriptures make clear that tithing is a commandment and is an outward sign of one's faith and willingness to sacrifice for the building of the kingdom. In the event we give tithing and the receiver uses it for unrighteous purposes, then the sin be upon them—not the tithe payer. The tithe payer will be blessed for his or her faithfulness according to the promises of the Lord as outlined in the scriptures.

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