



“Generous people have a better life.”

“Live and give like no one else.”

~ Dave Ramsey ~

WHITE PAPER: Giving/Tithing to the Church

What We Believe about Giving

- We give to the church as an act of worship to God for the everlasting goodness and great generosity He has shown to us.
- God blesses those who are generous and those who support His kingdom work.
- Our God is a generous God, so we give because we desire to live like Him.
- We give to provide for one another in the church, so that no one has a need.
- We give because we love our church and we recognize that the church has physical needs that need to be met in order to accomplish the work God has given us to do - including, but not limited to; building/facilities costs, a pastor and his family to support, as well as other operational costs.

“Let giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving—all because God loves hilarious generosity!” ~ 2 Corinthians 9:7

God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10-12), He doesn't *need* your money! As Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” In the same way, giving was made for man, not man for giving. Your identity and worth to God and to SHIFT church is not found in your financial giving, rather, giving was meant to be a blessing to you from God. *“For we must always cherish the words of our Lord Jesus, who taught, ‘Giving brings a far greater blessing than receiving.’”* (Acts 20:35)

“WHY should I give to the local church?”

Giving sets our minds on eternity, connects our hearts with the local church, and keeps our minds and hearts from being held captive by American consumerism. As Jesus taught, *“For your heart will always pursue what you value as your treasure.”* (Matt. 6:35) and to *“Glorify God with all your wealth, honoring him with your very best, with every increase that comes to you.”* (Proverbs 3:9)

God is a giver of eternal (John 3:16) and temporal (Deuteronomy 8:17-18, James 1:17) gifts and when a follower of Christ freely and joyfully gives away their increase, whether it be money, possessions, time, or talents, they are imitating God and honoring God. A great question to ask often ourselves is, “What do people think of God when they think of the way I use my money?” Giving testifies to watching observers in the world of God’s power and generous spirit and verifies the authenticity of our faith.

Paul taught that giving to support the accomplishing of God’s work is *“a sweet sacrifice, perfumed with the fragrance of your faithfulness, which is so pleasing to God!”* (Philippians 4:18) God sees any action toward His Church as an act towards Himself personally (Matthew 25:31-46). Giving is an act of generosity and generosity is viewed by God as loving kindness. So, giving to the church is an act of love to God Himself by demonstrating love for one of the things God loves, His church - His people.

God loves you the same before and after you give. The creator of the universe, who created everything doesn’t NEED anything *from* you. He wants something FOR you; blessing/gladness, generosity, love, grace, joy, discipline, hope, peace...and so many things. He is incredibly generous to His Church and He wants to teach us His “hilarious generosity” and that it is not meant to be done begrudgingly or fearfully out of compulsion, guilt, shame, or coercion.

Giving should not be considered an afterthought or given out of what’s “left over”, to make sure you “have enough” *after* you budget everything else. It is to be given as our “first fruits” off the top. So, when you sit down to make your monthly budget, put it in there first. The “tenth” (tithe) is a good place to start.

*If you *are* truly poor - and struggle to even feed your family - let the church and others take care of *you* and give what and when you can. God still wants to teach you generosity in the midst of your poverty, but it may look different than financial gifts during this season. Generosity of time, affection, service, and love are not simply characteristics for the wealthy.

*For deeper dialogue about the theological concepts surrounding tithing, contributions, paying pastors, supporting the local church as an organization, the current budget, how to put together a budget and/or get control over and create a financial trajectory for yourself or your family, as well as other questions, comments, or concerns; please email us at info@theshiftchurch.com and we’d love to sit down and be relationally intentional to have a conversation with you to provide greater clarity on how we operate here at SHIFT church. Watch Alan’s sermon on Giving at theSHIFTchurch.com/give