

FINANCIAL GIVING

Let's get this into context.....

Everything we have is God's:

Our possessions, time, money and gifts.

If everything ultimately is God's then we are *stewards, not owners*.

God owns everything, so you are giving back to God what is already his.

We are called, not just to give financial gifts but also to be part of the life and ministry of the church.

That includes outreach, mission, PCC, work with children, youth, school assemblies, pastoral care and other ministries.

Financial giving is *only one* aspect of our giving.

What does the Bible say?

The Old Testament said we should give a proportion of everything we receive, back to God in recognition that he first gave it to us.

The Old Testament law required that everyone give a 10% tithe, which really just means a fixed percentage of their income, which was the bare minimum. In effect we are fortunate in being able to keep 90% of everything God has given us, but we first give 10% back to God.

This was all required as part of the law, given by God through

Moses. The nation of Israel was made up of 12 tribes and one of these tribes, the Levites, were priests called to serve the whole nation.

The tithe given by other tribes was used to provide for their needs. Even then, the Levites had to give 10% of what they received (a tithe of a tithe) in making sacrifices to God (That's why the PCC gives a minimum of 10% away from the money given to us by you).

The purpose of the tithe was to give thanks to God for his provision and blessing (in rescuing them from slavery in Egypt and leading them to a new land), and also in order to provide for God's work, administered through the Levites who were the priests.

Take a look:

- Numbers 18:20-32 *The Levites*
- Exodus 35:1-36:7 *Making the Tabernacle*
- Leviticus 27:30-33 *Tithing 10%*
- Deuteronomy 26:1-10 *Tithing as a way of giving thanks*
- Malachi 3:8-10 *Bringing our full tithe*

The New Testament didn't spell out the need for financial giving because the subject had already been covered in the Old Testament. If anything, our response should be to *exceed* this, not to fall short of it.

The Levites of our time are the Christians in full time ministry, those engaged in overseas mission, Christian charities, youth work, children's work and many other ministries.

Giving a *proportion* of all that we receive in income is an important principle, and giving 10% is a good start. However, we don't need to be legalistic about it; there is no rule or obligation.

The New Testament is clear that there is a connection between our income and our level of giving. If we apply these principles it should mean a *higher* commitment from us not only to look after others in need, but also to resource the people serving our communities. If you read the passages below it will be clear that although giving isn't prescriptive, it should be planned.

Take a look:

- 1 Corinthians 9:9-11 *Right to be paid for Christian ministry*
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 *Paul says to put aside money to give*
- 2 Corinthians 8 *Encouragement to be generous*
- 2 Corinthians 9:6,7 *Be a cheerful giver*
- James 2:14-17 *Faith and works go together*

Everyone should give what they have prayerfully decided in their heart to give, and not reluctantly or under compulsion. Whatever you decide to give, it should be *planned* and consistent, as this enables us to plan what we are doing as a church.

STEP 1: Questions to ask yourself

- Do you have a budget for your income?
- What are your spending habits?
- Do you know how much you currently give to God?
- What percentage of your income is this?

STEP 2: Review your giving

- Pray and ask God how much of your income you should be giving back to Him? (Church, charitable giving, aid etc.)
- And how much of this should be given to St John's?
- If you can't give 10% of your income then increase your giving incrementally and fix a date to review how much you give.

Resources

Budget Planners:

www.ecclesiastical.com/foryou/financialadvice/budgetplanner/index.aspx

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner

Christians Against Poverty (Debt help) <https://capuk.org>

Funding the Church of England:

www.churchofengland.org/about-us/funding.aspx

Overview of Tithing:

www.stewardship.org.uk

And finally, a BIG thank you to all those who generously support the work of St John's in Buckhurst Hill, not only in financial giving, but in the many hours you give to help us serve our local community. We are very grateful, and recognize that we could not do what we do without your generosity and commitment.

With love from Ian, Corinne and Sarah