



Giving Distinctive

Summary Statement

At Longview Christian Church, we describe giving or stewardship through a humble reading of scripture. We believe that giving is a powerful expression of worship acknowledging the provision of God and the blessings given to his creation.

The Biblical Example

Mark 12:41-44 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Acts 4:32-35 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power, the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

The Picture at LCC

The traditional practice of a tithe is literally giving of a *tenth* of income or produce, and has its roots in the Old Testament, and as a tradition, was carried forward for hundreds of years. The practice of tithing summons both good and bad images. We believe giving is a joyful sacrifice of a portion of what has been entrusted to the believer by God. Rather than a legalistic, specific amount, the Christ-follower gives freely and joyfully. Some still use the idea of a tithe as a goal or as a starting block—the point is the heart behind the action.

Giving accomplishes two formational actions: we acknowledge that we have been supremely blessed by the Sovereign Creator of the universe; and, we trust in him to take care of our needs and the needs of those around us as an act of faith.

Giving a portion back, in a sacrificial way, is a bold expression of worship. God entrusted talents and resources to those created in his image to use in a way that glorifies him. When our talents, passions, and abilities reap a financial reward, there may be no greater acknowledgment of God's goodness than to give. He has blessed. We get to bless others. We take advantage of several tools to help facilitate this particular expression of worship: our website; through text messaging, before, during, and after our Sunday morning services in our giving boxes; or on those special Sundays when we pass offering plates.¹

Giving always comes with a cost. This understanding is what brings the Christian's trust of God into view. In our sacrifice, we participate in something larger than ourselves through local ministries, initiatives, and even advancing the Gospel in far-reaching corners of the world.

¹ More information is located in our Membership Distinctive on the relationship between giving and membership.