

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Bible say about giving money?

The people of Israel in the Old Testament gave in two ways, “tithes” and “offerings”. The “tithe” (a tenth of income or produce) was a regular gift to provide for the ongoing worship of the temple. “Offerings” were more irregular; they included extra gifts by individuals as a mark of worship and thanksgiving and also major giving events, when thousands gave money, jewelry, etc. to build the temple, for example. These offerings could be much more than a tenth of the wealth of the giver.

The New Testament also has plenty to say about giving, especially in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, chapters 8-9 and in the story of the early church in Acts 2 and 4. Concern for the glory of God and the needs of others led to deep generosity by these early Christians.

Should I be giving?

If you are a Christian, the answer is “yes”. Proverbs 3:9-10 says that we honor God when we give Him the first part of our income. Jesus said that wherever our treasure is, our heart will follow (Matthew 6:21). In light of this reality it is little wonder that God specifically commands that we honor Him with our wealth. As author Bob Beasley says in *The Wisdom of Proverbs*, “This is the bottom line: that we affirm our trust in God by generous giving to His Kingdom. Thereby we know the true riches of Jesus. Bless your pastor, your congregation, yourself, and indeed the world, as you honor God by your faithful giving”.

How should I give?

Joyfully - “God loves a cheerful giver” Giving is part of our worship to God (Philippians 4:18) and through our giving we have the privilege of sharing in the work that God is doing.

Sacrificially - David said, “I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing.” Jesus commended the poor widow who gave all she had, even though it was just a couple of coins. Such sacrifice grows out of a commitment to Christ and recognition that He is Lord of all and owns all we are and have. Giving a proportion of income will involve a sacrifice of some luxuries. Read 2 Corinthians 8: 1-5.

Thoughtfully - The Corinthian Christians were urged to set aside money each week, according to their income, and have it ready when it was needed (1 Corinthians 16:1-3). Our giving should not be based on how much is in our pockets when the offering plate comes around! Nor should our giving should not be based on how we feel at the moment on any given Sunday. Giving should be thoughtfully predetermined based on our love and commitment to Christ.

Is tithing for today?

A tithe (10% of yearly income given to the church) is clearly a biblical mandate found in not one or two obscure passages, but throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament

teaches that we are to give in proportion to the material blessing we receive. It also commends sacrificial giving. When one commits to tithing, you are not committing to a religious law. You are simply responding to Christ's love for us and His grace.

“Two informative pamphlets, “*The 6 Myths of Giving*” and “*How To Be An Automatic Tither*”, written by Senior Pastor Jim Wood, are available from the church office. They provide an excellent opportunity to more clearly understand the biblical foundation for stewardship and the path for becoming a tither.

What method of giving should I use?

The easiest method for both you and FPC is a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly contribution. If you prefer you can use the numbered ‘personal offering envelope’ that is provided by FPC. Contact the Business Office (625-1697, extension 307) and ask for envelopes if you don't have any. A numbered booklet of weekly envelopes will be issued to you. When counted someone in the Business Office will record your contribution by your identifying number, thus assuring your confidentiality. Envelopes serve to remind us at home to prepare our offering to the Lord in advance of arriving at church.

How can I get started tithing?

Tithing, or giving 10% of your income to the Lord, is a biblical standard by which we measure our giving to the Lord. When we have not yet reached the tithing level we know that we have a ways to go to come up to God's standard. Tithing is a standard of measurement, not a law.

Often individuals find it extremely difficult to begin tithing when it has not been a custom or spiritual discipline. One way to begin is by using your offering envelopes EVERY WEEK. Even if all you can put in is a dollar or ten dollars you will be establishing a good spiritual discipline. Begin your giving with a promise to God to never go “empty handed” to the House of God. Begin your giving as the Lord has prospered you. Then grow in your giving as you learn to trust God in the matters of personal finance. (Malachi 3:10) God has promised, “Trust me in this. Prove me and see if I do not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing so that there is no room to receive it.”

What is pledging?

A pledge is not a legal document. Pledging is making a commitment to give a certain amount of money to FPC in a year, usually with an indication of when the money is intended to be given, i.e. weekly, monthly, etc. It is a giving level you pick to which you are willing to be reminded quarterly during the year. Your pledge tells us, "I am part of FPC, and I want to show that this church and its goals are important to me." Pledging is considered to be an important part of membership at FPC.

When should I pledge?

Each October, we conduct an annual stewardship campaign, asking all our members and others to make pledges that will form the basis for the following year's operating budget (January-December). If you missed the campaign, or not felt ready to pledge at that time,

please request a pledge card that you can fill out and turn in anytime. Contact the Business Office (625-1697, extension 307) for assistance. People join throughout the year, and should not wait for the stewardship campaign to begin formally supporting FPC.

Why does FPC ask us to pledge?

Pledging is one area where the spiritual needs of individuals and the corporate need of FPC intersect. First, pledging provides people the opportunity to think about the place of money in their lives. Second, FPC uses the total amount pledged when it creates its annual budget.

Why should I pledge money to FPC?

We believe that FPC is the Body of Christ and that God works through FPC to do God's work in our world. When we pledge to FPC, we pledge to God and to God's work. In addition, FPC provides us a spiritual home – a place to worship, learn, and serve. Those who are able have a responsibility to support the ministries of FPC.

Why does FPC need my money?

Remember, God does not need our money. However, because God has chosen to work through FPC, God calls us to give so that the FPC can do God's work. FPC has an annual budget of over \$2 million dollars. Over 75% of this comes from pledges. The worship, education, outreach, and fellowship programs that we offer would not be possible without the generous pledge of our members.

What should I pledge if I cannot tithe?

You do not have to become a "tither" all at once. Many people start small, giving one or two percent and increasing the percentage each year. Figure out what percentage of your income you gave this year and see if you can increase that percentage when you pledge for next year. Even if you can pledge only a minimum amount, fill in the pledge card as part of your spiritual commitment.