

Questions

Question: Are we as the body of Christ supposed to tithe? My pastor says that we are but I hear others say that we are not. He also says that we are not really giving unless we give an offering on top of our tithe. What do you say?

I have heard these things also. At one place I attended the elder who did the pulpit preaching proclaimed that we are to tithe and give an offering and that we were not giving unless we gave until it hurts. I've also heard men say, from the pulpit, that even though tithing is not taught in the Epistles it is a good place to start. This teaching is not isolated to the assembly that I attended and yours but very widespread among Christian denominational churches. In fact, most (not all) churches teach tithing as part of their doctrine or at the very least will not discourage the practice.

So, the real question is not about what is taught, but should be: "What does God say about tithing?" because man will come up with all sorts of practices and procedures claiming it came from the Bible, whether it is in context or not. What we will do here is look at the subject by "rightly dividing" the Word and put things in the context in which He gave it. In the toolbox there is a section called Doctrine where we have put together Scriptures about each subject: no. 19 is tithe/tithing and no. 20 is giving/sharing. Refer to this tool to see passages that will show each in its proper context. When we know what the Word says, that is the best teacher. I highly recommend you read those passages.

Some things that need to be pointed out about this subject:

1. Before the law was given to Israel, Abraham "*gave him a tenth of everything*" (of the spoils) after returning from war, to Melchizedek but note as you read the account that he was not commanded by God to do so, he did it on his own.
2. Jacob made a vow to the Lord "*...of all that you give me I will give you a tenth*" again before the law was given and was under no command of God to do so.
3. After the law was given to Israel, God made tithing a part of that law as a command to those under that law for a specific purpose. Read the passages in no.19 tithing for purpose.
4. Jesus came and died on the cross, fulfilling the law and nailed it to the cross (*Colossians 2:13-14*) and established a new covenant that is under the grace of God, not the Mosaic Law. He ascended to the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell believers and a "new creation," the body of Christ, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, is now to be gathered. At this point we need to now move into the Epistles *Romans* through *Jude* and *Acts* to see how this new creation is to operate under this new covenant of grace.
5. As you read the passages under no. 20, pay attention to the emphasis given; we are to consider our possessions not our own and share/give to the needs of the body as the needs arise. Also notice that not one single time in the Epistles is the body commanded to tithe. As a matter of fact the only time tithing is mentioned in the Epistles is in *Hebrews* where it is talking about Abraham and Israel, not the body.

Ask yourself a question: if we, as the body of Christ, are commanded to tithe, why are we not told to do so? Some teachers go back to the Old Testament and the accounts of Christ coming (*Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*) to make justification for their teaching and to Israel under the Mosaic Law where they were commanded to tithe, but we are not under the Mosaic covenant of law, but under the new covenant of grace. If you will notice as you read how Israel was to give, that their tithing consisted of more than money. They were to tithe all sorts of things: grain, animals, wine, etc. Can you imagine what would happen if a chicken farmer showed up on Sunday morning at the church with a truck load of chickens or a pig farmer with a trailer load of pigs or what about a person who makes wine showing up at a Baptist church with barrels of wine. That would be interesting wouldn't it?

This subject, like so many others when taken out of context, where we put people who are under a new covenant of grace, under a covenant of law, is tragically deceptive. The sad fact is that many churches today want MONEY so that they can continue to have a job and support the building and all of the programs they promote, all under the guise of their "mission," and putting the body under a command of law is a very effective way to accomplish this. We recognize that many teach this command of the law out of ignorance, because they just don't know how to "rightly divide" the Word of God, but there are others who do know the difference and do it intentionally. I would not want to be one of these men, facing the Lord, having intentionally deceived His Body for personal gain.

To conclude: if a member of the body today wants to tithe, is it ok for him to do so? Yes, **BUT**, do it with the **understanding that you are not under law nor commanded to do so**. You are not breaking a command where

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you can be condemned and if you miss a week, God is not going to zap you. You would not be sinning if you do tithe and you are not sinning if you don't. Your **gift** is pleasing to God when you give/share with the needs of the body as you "*decided in his heart to give*" (read *2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9*). Here we see that the Corinthians were giving to a specific need but notice the things said about how they were to give: "*privilege of sharing*" 8:4, "*grace of giving*" 8:7, "*Desire to do so*" 8:10, "*according to your means*", "*according to what one has, not according to what he does not have*" 8:11-13, "*decided in his heart to give*" 9:7, "*supplying the needs of God's people*" 9:12, "*generosity in sharing*" 9:13. Read both chapters, there is more. This is giving/sharing under grace, not tithing.