

The Biblical Tradition of Tithing

Encouraging the Tithe: Growing in Grace Resource Kit,
by American Baptist Churches World Mission Support

Tithing is a biblical tradition. The Bible conveys a variety of images about the meaning and benefits of tithing. Reflect on these ten images and their importance in your life.

Gratitude

Genesis 14:20; 28:22

The earliest reports of tithing have nothing to do with the law. Once Abraham and Jacob realized the mercies of God, thankful giving of the tithe seemed natural and necessary.

Covenant

Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:1-5

In the covenant, God promises to sustain, support and bless the people. By tithing, the people acknowledge God's ownership of all things, celebrate God's goodness, maintain places of worship and care for the poor.

Sacrifice

2 Samuel 24:24

David was committed to sacrificial giving. The covenant of grace, through the cross, cost God. My response under grace should cost me.

Worship

Leviticus 27:30

Throughout the Old Testament, the tithe was given as part of worship. Tithe giving as an act of worship expresses praise and thanksgiving to God.

Percentage Giving

1 Corinthians 16:2

From the beginning, God instructed people to give a percentage. The issue is not "How much has the budget increased?" The issue is "What is God's share of my income?"

Guideline

2 Corinthians 9:8-15

Paul Called Christians to give generously and sacrificially. The tithe can be a guideline from which we learn the meaning of giving in grace.

Weightier Matters

Matthew 23:23

The tithe is not enough. Justice, mercy and faith are required as well. Tithing is not "either/or" but "both/and."

God's Ownership

Malachi 3:1-10

Malachi insisted the people were robbing God by not giving their tithe. Though we are freed from the legalism of that time, are we tempted to "rob God" in our stewardship?

Disciplinarian

Galatians 3:24

The law was our "disciplinarian until Christ came." The tithe helps us learn what it means to give generously and sacrificially. *[Note: The Greek word is for a tutor who teaches the child enough that he or she can attend school. So "preschool teacher" might be a better translation.]*

A Gift of Joy

2 Corinthians 9:7

Tithing is not a burdensome duty but a joyful opportunity. We experience joy by supporting the most important work in the world.

**The Bible witnesses to the value of tithing in our lives as God's people.
These images encourage us in our journey of growing and giving in grace.**