

WHAT ABOUT GIVING?

The basics of giving

Christians have a responsibility to manage well the resources that God has entrusted to us in a planned and prioritised way by giving to the Church, to missions and to the poor.

God owns everything. The fundamental truth about giving is that God owns everything. Psalm 24:1 states that "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." God entrusts resources to us. Possessions and wealth are like trust accounts that God gives us in varying portions. The parable of the dishonest manager in Luke 16 reminds us that God owns everything and we are the trustees of His resources. Our responsibility is to manage God's resources well.

Our role is to manage the resources that God has entrusted to us in a way that pleases Him. In other words, we are stewards or overseers of what He has provided for our lives and we are accountable to Him for all He has placed in our hands. There are great benefits in being good stewards.

The Bible states that when we fail to return to God what is His, we are in effect "robbing" Him (Malachi 3:8-11). On the other hand, the same passage promises that God will "open the windows of heaven for us" when we observe the scriptural principle of giving. God is looking for channels through whom He will allow His resources to flow. When we give and manage His resources well, we are participating in the Kingdom task and we become partners in making an impact for God. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Paul encourages Christians to give more freely and cheerfully because God rewards good givers. In other words, God blesses us not so much materially but spiritually when we give. Giving reveals our hearts and our faith. Jesus says "For where your treasure is, your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21).

How we manage the resources that God has given us reveals two things about us. First of all, our spending reveals our priorities. If we do not use our money in a way that honours God and furthers His kingdom, then it brings into question the reality of our commitment to Jesus Christ. Secondly, giving is an act of faith. When we give, we are in fact making a statement about whom and in what we trust. Earthly possessions are temporary but the money we give to God will be used by Him for the eternal purpose of advancing His kingdom.

Frequently asked questions about giving

How much should I give?

The practice of the Old Testament tithe (a tenth part or ten per cent) is neither taught nor rescinded in the New Testament. However, many Christians believe that ten per cent is a good benchmark. Some believe it to be a good starting point, as many Christians today give far more than ten per cent. At Hamilton Road Baptist Church, we believe that how much a person gives is a decision that should be prayerfully made between the believer and God. However, we suggest the following guidelines to help you in determining the amount you

give:

- Your giving should be proportional to what you earn. The more you earn, the more you should give.
- Your giving should be sacrificial. Sacrifice means giving up something you value for the sake of a higher purpose.

When should I give?

Your giving should be systematic. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). It must be planned and not sporadic. Giving should also be a priority. Proverbs 3:9 instructs "Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first of all your crops."

Where should I give?

The Church - You should begin by giving to the community of believers to which you belong. Giving to your Church strengthens its ministry, outreach and stability.