

Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

Proportionate Giving

First the "Giving" Part

Giving is a by-product of faith. It is an outward expression of priorities and heart. If you put God first in your life, your wallet will be open to Him.

The miracle of stewardship is that the more you give, the more you receive. You won't always receive in kind, but what you receive is more precious than what you give, because God's gift to you is greater than your gifts to Him.

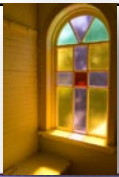
- **Give First fruits.** Give God the first portions of your income. By doing that you constantly remember God's ownership. (Prov. 3:9)
- **Give Proportionately.** Give in proportion to the income you receive, not a specific dollar amount. If you earn \$100, a tithe (10%) would be \$10. If you earn \$100,000, your proportionate gift would be \$10,000. God sees the \$10 gift just as important and meaningful as the \$10,000 gift. Proportionate giving challenges both the rich and the poor. (1 Cor. 16:2)
- **Give Sacrificially.** At times God asks you to give until you can truly feel the giving. Giving sacrificially usually includes one of the following: a rearrangement of priorities, a change in lifestyle, or a forfeiture of something valued. When you give sacrificially, you give your best. (2 Cor. 8: 2-3)
- **Give Regularly.** The Bible tells us to give "on the first day of every week." While money may be tight during some periods of time, for the most part, the failure to give is a spiritual problem. It is hard to imagine God accepting the excuses conjured up about not honoring Him with your treasures. (1 Cor. 16:2 and 2 Cor. 9:8)
- **Give Cheerfully.** Receiving is great, but the exhilaration is greater when you are able to give to another person. The Holy Spirit uses your giving to deepen your faith in Christ. (2 Cor. 9:7)
- **Give Quietly.** Your purpose should be to please God, not to be seen by others. (Matt. 6:1)
- **Tithe.** Tithing is the practice of honoring God with one tenth (10%) of your income. God is not concerned about the size of the gift, but the motive for it. (Gen. 28:10-22) Tithing is giving God a portion of your best, not your leftovers.

Adapted from *Becoming Money Wise* by Ronald J. Chewning. Copyright (c) 1998 by Concordia Publishing House.

Now, the "Proportionate" part

Proportionate giving involves two points:

1. That our level of giving needs to rise out of our level of income.
2. That giving out of thanks for God's blessings will involve sharing a portion of that income with others. This is proportionate giving.



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A great deal is said today about **tithing** as the highest form of proportionate giving. The 10 percent tithe is held up as the standard for Christian stewards. And there are a great many advantages to endorsing such a standard.

- It is a biblical standard.
- It is related to income and not to a congregation's budget.
- It has "universality" about it, in that the concept is as old as the early Old Testament.

The fact is that no specific percentage adequately expresses our stewardship before God. It is in the qualities of thankfulness, love, and joy that the concept of proportionate giving has its foundation. We express these qualities in a practical manner. The system can be described very easily. Take your annual gross income and simply multiply it by the percentage that you want to share with God in your material giving. Then divide that amount by the weeks in one year.

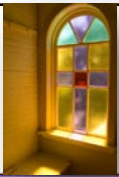
The amount you come up with seldom comes out to even dollar amounts, but that has the real value of moving away from the prison that puts gifts in round numbers without basing the giving on any systematic measure. A weekly gift of an odd amount, \$9.23, for example, will continually focus attention on the percentage and will be a constant affirmation of the person as a proportionate giver every time the check is written. The major advantages of proportionate giving are:

1. It puts the emphasis where it belongs on giving out of income.
2. It keeps us honest about our giving; honest about the real value of our gift in relation to what we have. The measure is not by pure dollar amounts, against what others with more can give, or against what others with less are able to give. The measure remains where it needs to be, yourself against yourself, what you give against what you have.
3. It allows every person to stand on equal ground as a giver. The giver with modest income who gives 3 percent of that income can be affirmed in this giving along with the big giver who gives 3 percent of a much larger income. The dollar amounts will vary considerably, but each is sharing equally with God through the Church out of what God has provided.

Remember

Whatever percentage you may be able to consider, Proportionate Giving is the way:

- To be Christian in our giving;
 - To be honest with ourselves
 - To be faithful to God;
 - To empower our ministry together.
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Sobering Statistics

"During the last half-century in America, increased wealth has coincided with decreased giving. Pollster George Barna writes, "Generally, the more money a person makes the less likely he is to tithe." Indeed, giving levels were higher during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when incomes were low compared to today. Barna also confirmed that another factor influencing giving levels is faith-commitment: Giving is proportionately higher among born-again Christians. Why is this? "

- **Potential for Giving:** If historically Christian church members had given 10 percent of their income to the Church in 2004, it would have added up to an additional \$164 billion.⁵¹
- **Few Support the Church:** Only one-third to one-half of U.S. church members financially support their churches.¹⁶
- **Donating over Tithing:** Overall, only 3 to 5 percent of those who donate money to a church tithe (give 10 percent of) their incomes.¹⁸
- **Pledging and Giving:** People who pledge give three times as much as those who don't.¹⁶
- **Low Percent Gives High Percent:** Religious observers (only 38 percent of all Americans) give two-thirds of all charitable dollars in the United States. (The Gallup Organization)

From the Generous Giving website <http://www.generousgiving.org/statistics> [Link to the associated footnotes for the above statistics on charitable giving.](#)