

Gospel Stewardship

At Vine Church, we believe that the only way to understand any aspect of life is to view it through the lens of the story of Jesus (the gospel).

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul discusses the impact the story of Jesus should have on the way Christians understand wealth: *'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'*

Seeing Christ's sacrificial love for us, that he gave up everything so that we could inherit the riches of heaven, helps us develop a healthy attitude toward our material possessions and become people who are both generous and joyful. Understanding the riches we have already received in Christ not only liberates us from excessive concern over our wealth, talents, and time, but also motivates us to invest them in the eternal kingdom of God. A steward is a person who has been entrusted with another's resources, and who seeks to manage those resources according to the owner's vision and values. The gospel calls us to recognize that everything we have is a gift from God, and that those gifts are to be used for his glory and to further his kingdom. Scripture even calls Christians, caretakers of God's gifts and truth (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 4:1). We at Vine Church recognize that in addition to acting as responsible stewards of our talents and skills, we must also be stewards of our possessions and finances.

This booklet is intended to help us be good stewards. In what follows we address the following commonly asked questions:

1. Why and how much should I give?
2. Where should I give?
3. How can I give?

Why and how much should I give?

The principle

In the Old Testament, God's people gave a tenth of all their produce to God in response to his generous blessings to them ('the tithe'). The idea of giving a tenth is first seen with Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 14, 28), and is then made explicit in the Law of Moses. It was to be given generously with much rejoicing, not legalistically or begrudgingly (Numbers 18; Deuteronomy 12, 14, 26; 2 Chronicles 31; Malachi 3).

Having received the tithe from Israel, God then redirected it to His work – to the priests and Levites, as well as to those in need, such as widows and orphans.

As New Testament believers, we are still to give back to God in response to His generous blessings to us (note the language of *"an offering acceptable to God"* in Phil 4:18). Indeed we have received God's ultimate generosity to us in the death of His Son, *"who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, so that through His poverty we might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). If we truly understand this gospel, we will cheerfully give as much as we can, and at times, even beyond our ability (2 Corinthians 8-9).

So how much should we give to God? A tenth is a good starting point, but it should only be the starting point for considering how generous we can be, rather than a legalistic figure that we must obey. The more fundamental question to ponder is: how much have we received from God? As we answer this question, we see that He has given us immeasurably more than we could imagine through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In practice

The first practical step is to work out how much money you have to begin with. The table below is a tool to help you do this.

<i>Annual Giving</i>					
<i>Annual Income</i>	6%	8%	10%	12%	14%
10,000	600	800	1,000	1,200	1,400
20,000	1,200	1,600	2,000	2,400	2,800
30,000	1,800	2,400	3,000	3,600	4,200
40,000	2,400	3,200	4,000	4,800	5,600
50,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,000	7,000
60,000	3,600	4,800	6,000	7,200	8,400
70,000	4,200	5,600	7,000	8,400	9,800
80,000	4,800	6,400	8,000	9,600	11,200
90,000	5,400	7,200	9,000	10,800	12,600
100,000	6,000	8,000	10,000	12,000	14,000
120,000	7,200	9,600	12,000	14,400	16,800
140,000	8,400	11,200	14,000	16,800	19,600

<i>Weekly Giving</i>					
<i>Annual Income</i>	6%	8%	10%	12%	14%
10,000	12	15	19	23	27
20,000	23	31	38	46	54
30,000	35	46	58	69	81
40,000	46	62	77	92	108
50,000	58	77	96	115	135
60,000	69	92	115	138	162
70,000	81	108	135	162	188
80,000	92	123	154	185	215
90,000	104	138	173	208	242
100,000	115	154	192	231	269
120,000	138	185	231	277	323
140,000	162	215	269	323	377

Where should I give?

The principle

In the Old Testament, the Israelite tithe was directed to those who needed it – to the priests and Levites, who had no other source of income because of their duties; and also to the poor. We see a similar pattern in the New Testament, where Christian giving is directed to meeting the needs of those who labour amongst us in the Lord, as well as towards the poor. As Paul puts it in Galatians 6: *"Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches"; and then a few verses later: "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith"*.

In practice

In practical terms, this means directing our money not only towards Vine Church, but also to the work of the gospel further afield, and to those in need. At Vine Church we encourage people to give a weekly tithe, which is set up electronically, and supplementing this with a quarterly or annual offering to our missions and justice projects.

How can I give?

Online: tithe.ly/give?c=6085

Electronic Bank Transfer: St Michaels Anglican Church Surry Hills | BSB 062 033 | AC 1075 0624

More information?

Please don't hesitate to get in contact with us if you'd like to speak with one of the Parish Council or Wardens should you like to know more about how the financial affairs of Vine Church are managed.