

Shepherd Statement – Financial Giving Guidance for DRBC Members

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it...” Psalm 24:1

God is the Creator and rightful owner of all things. Our possessions come from the Lord and should be stewarded in ways that honor Him, serve His purposes, and bless people. This statement is intended to help members of Del Ray Baptist Church understand how Scripture counsels us to give.

How Are Believers to Give?

To help our church prayerfully consider how to give of its wealth, we encourage members to reflect on the themes associated with giving in the New Testament.

1. Believers give humbly, knowing that all we have is from God.

God is the Creator of all things, and anything we have comes from His gracious hand (1 Chronicles 29:11, 16; Psalm 24:1-2; 50:10-12; 89:11; James 1:17). 1 Corinthians 4:7 asks the penetrating question, “what do you have that you did not receive?” Not only does our wealth come from the Lord, but our ability to earn it comes from Him as well (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

The jobs we hold, the success we’ve known, the connections we’ve gained, the relationships we’ve built, and the experiences that have shaped us: all come from Him. God has given us minds, bodies, and health necessary to work. Most importantly, He has given us His Son; the most valuable of all treasures, and grants to us the free gift of salvation through Him. All of these blessings are gifts from God that create a posture of humility from which we give back to the Lord.

2. Believers give regularly, as a godly discipline.

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul said to the Corinthians, “On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.” Regularly giving to the Lord’s work is a clear pattern in the New Testament, and is also a wise discipline. By giving regularly, we train our hearts to consistently remember that what we have belongs to God and ought be used for God’s glory (Matthew 6:21).

3. Believers give with priority, being faithful to support the work of our local church.

The clear New Testament pattern is for believers to support the work God is doing in their local church. Believers give to address the needs of fellow church members (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37), to sustain the pastors who feed them spiritually (Galatians 6:6; 1 Corinthians 9:3-12; 1 Timothy 5:17-18), and to support missions connected with their local church (Romans 15:28; 1 Corinthians 16:1; Philippians 4:18; 3 John 5-8).

In the book of Acts, we see a pattern of church members bringing offerings to the apostles for wise distribution to those in need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:34-35). The leadership of the church has the responsibility to give guidance to the church in addressing specific, known needs.

We are free to give generously to other faithful works, but the Biblical pattern is to give first to our local church, and then to support other works as we desire. In selecting para-church ministries to support, it is wise to select ones that are faithful to the gospel. The elders are available if you should ever desire prayer and/or guidance in making these decisions.

4. Believers give proportionately, according to what we have received.

The amount each believer is called to steward varies. The Lord does not call us to give an exact amount, but to give faithfully to His work (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). If we are entrusted with much wealth, we are called to hold it humbly and share it generously (1 Timothy 6:17-20). And, if we have little earthly wealth, we are exhorted to honor the Lord and give without fear or shame (Mark 12:41-44; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4). We must not compare what we give to what others give. Each one ought to be a good steward of the grace God has given to them (1 Peter 4:10).

5. Believers give sacrificially, as Jesus gave of Himself to us.

We are reminded in 2 Corinthians 8:9 that “you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.” Jesus gave up His glory and riches that we might be brought into them.

Our sacrificial giving helps to further Gospel work. It also enables us to tangibly express God’s love by giving to people in need. This was the spirit of the Christians in the first century who sacrificially gave of their own resources so that none among them lacked anything they needed (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-35). If your giving does not stretch your comfort, it could mean you are not giving sacrificially. This is not a call to give mindlessly or foolishly, but a call to check whether your giving reflects the Biblical priorities you profess and to which we are called.

6. Believers give generously, as the Lord has given generously to us.

2 Corinthians 9:6 tells us that “whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” The Lord delights to see His people give with open hearts that do not cling to the riches of this world. Stinginess is a sign of spiritual sickness, whereas generosity reflects a heart that is moved by the desire to give back to the One who gave so generously to us. There is a clear pattern in Scripture of

believers working hard for the purpose of sharing generously with fellow believers in need (Ephesians 4:28).

Giving generously to the Lord's work is one of the best ways to guard our hearts against the love of money (Matthew 6:19-24). By giving generously to the Lord, we surrender the illusion of security and control that money can give. Generosity is one of the most potent antidotes to the sin of greed.

7. Believers give joyfully, not out of duty, but with thanksgiving in our hearts.

Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 9:7 by saying, "each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." When Christians give to the One who granted us new life through the gift of His Son, this represents no mere duty, but a great honor. As we return the Lord's money to His treasury we do so in hope, knowing that the faithful stewardship of those resources will be used to further His Name among the nations.

For this reason, we have measures of accountability in handling the financial resources of the church, including the elders, a treasurer, a deacon of finance, and staff members who are involved in financial decisions and expenditures. We draw this from Scripture as well. When making plans to deliver a financial gift from the Corinthian church to the saints in Jerusalem, Paul entrusted the funds to trustworthy leaders, and he was even willing to accompany the group if such action might assure the church that financial resources were being handled with integrity (1 Corinthians 16:3-4).

8. Believers give worshipfully, to serve God rather than money.

As with all acts of worship, our giving should be done with a God-ward orientation. Our motivation ought to be the glory of God, not our own glory through meticulous rule keeping (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42). Giving can quickly turn into an empty ritual when void of worshipful faith. We must not give for the purpose of being noticed and praised by others (Matthew 6:1-4). Our aim should be to please God and bless others (James 2:14-17, 26).

9. Believers give hopefully, trusting God to reward us.

God "rewards those who seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). It pleases Him when we believe it. This is true in every area of our walk with God, including financial giving. The Philippian church sacrificially supported gospel ministry through financial giving, and Paul assured them that God would supply all their needs, according to His riches (Philippians 4:18-19). God sees our faithful giving and promises to reward us.

Some false teachers have twisted these kinds of promises to suggest that we should give

in order to receive financial prosperity. While God may choose to bless His children with abundant wealth, we should not give with the expectation that God will make us rich. God should not be treated like a vending machine or lottery ticket, where we give Him money and expect a windfall of wealth.

Rather, we give with the hope of a two-fold reward. First, Jesus promises eternal rewards in heaven when we use financial resources in faithful ways in this life (Mark 10:21). We cannot be certain what will comprise these rewards, but we can know that they will be worth it. Second, Jesus promises that giving up things as part of following Him will be repaid in this life (Luke 18:28-30). One of the great joys of the believer is to give generously to the Lord's work, and then to see Him supply for our needs in faithful and often miraculous ways.

10. Believers give in faith, in accordance with our consciences.

In Romans 14:23 we are told that “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” This reminds us that God desires all we do to flow from a heart that believes it is honoring God with its actions. Our giving ought to reflect this principle. When we give, we do so from a heart that hopes to honor God with our sacrificial, generous, joyful offering.

At this point some will still ask, “should we give 10%?” For many believers, 10% is an amount that serves as a wise starting place in their giving. But it is not required. There may be seasons where it is more faithful to give less money to the Lord's work and more faithful to give more money in other seasons.

Should Christians Tithe?

Giving a tithe (ten percent) of one's wealth to the Lord and His work is a principle we see throughout the Old Testament. Both Abraham and Jacob offered a tithe to the Lord (Genesis 14:20; 28:22) before the Mosaic Covenant was established. Under the Law, Israelites were required to give tithes of money and produce for various offerings (Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:25-28; Deuteronomy 14:22-24; 2 Chronicles 31:5-6; Nehemiah 13:5, 12). God promised blessing for those who obeyed this command and a curse for those who did not (Malachi 3:8-10).

These tithes were used to support the work of the Levitical priests who administered the sacrificial system. Freewill offerings were given in addition to the tithe as an individual worshiper desired. When we compile the various commands to tithe throughout the year, Israel's annual “giving” to the Lord amounted to around 20 percent of their possessions.

When Jesus came, He fulfilled the Law's requirements and died for all the ways His people broke them under the Mosaic Covenant (Matthew 5:17). Through faith in Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit and now relate to God under the New Covenant (Romans 6:14-15; Galatians 3:15-4:7; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18). Jesus' encouragement to tithe was

before He inaugurated the New Covenant and is not binding on believers today (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).¹

Under the New Covenant, believers are free from the Old Covenant and are no longer bound to its rules and regulations (Colossians 2:20-23; Hebrews 9:1, 10). We are no longer under the Law, but under grace (Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:18). This does not mean that God no longer calls His people to give to His work, but our motivation springs solely from a response to God's grace.

This means believers are not required by God's Law to tithe a strict ten percent (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). However, we do believe that a tithe can serve as a helpful starting point when considering what portion of our wealth to give to the Lord. Because we are under grace and the better promises of the New Covenant, Christians can freely know the surpassing joy of generous giving that exceeds the shadows of the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:6). As Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Words of Counsel

1. *Prayerfully study what Scripture teaches about giving.*

God promises, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). As you seek God's wisdom, spend time in focused prayer and study of God's Word. This statement is intended to aid your personal study of the Scriptures with the hopes that you can develop God-honoring convictions about how to generously give to God's Work.

2. *Seek wise counsel from trusted believers when it comes to your giving.*

Because there are many dangerous temptations associated with money, discussing your financial stewardship with another mature believer is important. Some people remain hesitant to do this for a host of reasons, but it is both wise and godly to involve others in these important considerations (Proverbs 15:22; 1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24-25). As you grow in spiritual maturity, you should also seek to help other members grow in how they use their resources. If you desire to have one of our gifted members help you think through finances, budgeting and giving, please let us know and we are happy to connect you.

3. *Develop a consistent pattern of giving as worship to God.*

Giving to the Lord is a spiritual discipline that we should develop as worship to God. By regularly setting aside money to give to the Lord's Work, we cultivate a posture of

¹ Jesus also spoke of offering sacrifices in the temple (Matthew 5:23-24), but we no longer offer sacrifices in the Temple under the New Covenant.

humble faithfulness that commits to not trusting in what fleeting money can give, but investing in God's eternal purposes. This discipline should be regularly evaluated and always spring from faith.

In addition to your regular giving, you can also consider giving DRBC's benevolence fund which is set up as an aid for people in need. The bulk of this fund is dedicated to the care of members, but a portion is also dedicated to help members of our community with whom we come in contact. Giving to the benevolence fund is normally done as a gift that is over and above your other commitments to the church. You can designate a gift to this fund by including a note in the memo line of your check or by giving online and selecting the benevolence fund.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the elders or email info@drbc.org.