

a simple guide to tithing

WHAT DOES TITHING MEAN?

The word tithe in the Bible means “the tenth.” God funds His work in the world by His people giving a tenth of their income. Tithing is an act of faith in which God invites every one of His followers to participate. It is an invitation to a new perspective with our finances and joining God in restoring and reconciling this world.

There are many examples of people in the Bible honoring God with the first 10% of their income: Abram – after God gave him victory in battle (Genesis 14:20); Jacob – in trusting God to honor His promises (Genesis 28:22); and all of Israel – in recognizing that everything belongs to God (Leviticus 27:30).

However, tithing is not just an Old Testament concept. The New Testament is full of instructions for giving financially to God’s work, trusting Him for the outcome, and expecting God to care for our needs. (Matthew 6:19-21, 25-33, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

In the Bible, we find a letter to a church in the city of Corinth. These early followers of Jesus were told giving should be well thought out, and done purposefully and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). With that in mind, here is a plan to help you get started: Make a commitment to put God first in your finances. Make your tithe the first line item on your electronic budget. If you wait, other commitments can cause fear and create the temptation to give God your “left-overs.”

DO I TITHE FROM THE GROSS OR NET OF MY PAYCHECK?

This is one of those gray areas that people like to argue about. It’s really up for you to decide and there isn’t a right or wrong answer. You honor God either way.

WHAT IF 10% IS TOO MUCH AT FIRST?

Set a fixed % less than 10% to start with. Make a plan to work up to the full tithe within a certain period of time. Having a goal allows you to honor your commitment no matter how your emotions or circumstances change. If you are struggling with your finances, drop us a note. We would love to connect you to a financial expert who attends our church and has made it their mission of helping people regain control of their finances so they can be faithful stewards of God’s resources.

WHAT ABOUT GIVING TO CHARITIES OUTSIDE OF CHURCH?

Charitable giving is encouraged. However, giving to the ministry of the local church is the Biblical model for tithing. Giving to charities should be considered a separate giving event after your tithe. In the scriptures, this is referred to as offerings. We encourage you find organizations that are close to your heart in addition to SEP. You may consider checking out some of the partnership organizations that SEP already supports financially and give them additional support.

WHO BENEFITS FROM MY TITHE?

There are countless people that benefit from tithing, including you. Knowing you have been obedient to God and that you are participating with Him in things with eternal consequence should lead to incredible joy. This type of regular giving reminds us we are the stewards, not the owners, of the resources God has so graciously given us.

But tithing goes way beyond our personal growth. Our faithful giving enables the church we love to be able to do the ministry God has given us the vision to do. The ministry of The Southeast Project has a direct affect on our community, reaching people with the story of Jesus and helping make measurable change in our world. Through our church ministries, local outreach, and global partnerships, we reach hundreds, even thousands of people, you and I could never reach alone.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GIVE?

Learn more about how giving changes your heart and makes an eternal impact in our “What Happens When You Give?” document at www.wearesoutheast.org/give.