

DOES EVERYONE ELSE AT THE CHURCH GIVE?

Unfortunately, no, not every family gives. Ministry efforts are limited when giving is limited. R.C. Sproul used to say that if a church has about \$100, then it can do about \$100 worth of ministry. Could God multiply our funds miraculously? Sure. But He generally doesn't choose to work that way. Usually, He tends to work in each of our hearts, softening them, transforming them, encouraging them to be generous. And a church's working budget is the result of how responsive people choose to be to God's prompting.

Allow me to come at this from a different angle. According to the 2000 census, the average home in Ashland has an income of \$40,500. In our church, some make more than this, and others make less than this, but the average is fairly accurate. And if each family would simply tithe their income, ministry efforts would see no limits and our new building would be fully paid for in just a few short years.

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

We would encourage everyone to consider becoming consistent givers. If you haven't been giving, make a plan to start right away. If you have been giving sporadically, make a plan to become a consistent giver. If you have been giving, but not as generously as the Lord has been prompting you, then make a plan to increase your giving to the level that the Lord is asking. If you haven't made a commitment to the campaign, it's not too late. Make a commitment. And ask a trusted friend to hold you accountable to your plan. The church will never hound you. This is more a matter of your heart than it is a requirement. But just think what God might choose to do through a group of people whose hearts (and money) are fully surrendered to Him.

LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

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Financially Giving



Salem Church
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Salem Church is in the midst of a building project, anticipating adding staff, and experiencing ever growing ministry, which may make some wonder how we can afford such significant steps. The Elders of our church work very hard to make sure direction is clear and management is wise. However, many do not understand Salem's approach to financial management and ministry support. Please read the following to get a quick but thorough explanation of what we believe the Bible teaches about giving to the local church.

WHAT IS THE "TITHE" THAT THE PASTORS TALK ABOUT?

The tithe is 10% of a person's income. In the Old Testament, this was the baseline standard for giving before and after the Law. However, in the New Testament, *while the tithe is still affirmed*, the baseline standard has changed. The new standard is "giving with a cheerful heart" and this cheerful heart is motivated by a desire to be a good steward. Giving with a cheerful heart requires the letting go of the delusion of ownership (This is *mine!*) and recognizing that all belongs to God and we are simply managers of His things.

IS GIVING EXPECTED?

Yes and No. Yes. Scripture teaches that each person should give to the local church of which they are a part; that this is an expression of worship to God. If a local church offers you biblical teaching, godly leadership, wise counsel, and deep community then it is a fair exchange that you consistently give financially to support the ministry of that church.

If by this question you are wondering if your individual giving is monitored, or policed, then the answer is no. Salem Church will always maintain the highest standards of privacy for people to give what they feel led to give.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT?

No. The apostle Paul writes that each person should give what he has prayerfully determined in his own heart to give. Remember, this is not about meeting a requirement. Giving is a matter of the heart more than it is a matter of expectation. A person who is being conformed to the image of Christ will love the church like He loved the church and they will want to generously support it.

IS MY GIVING CONFIDENTIAL?

Absolutely. The pastors and most staff never see giving statements, nor does the congregation. Your name and your gift are only known to those responsible for entering your information into our tax receipt database.

WHAT IF MY BUDGET IS TIGHT?

The Bible presents this idea: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, but whoever sows generously will also reap generously. So, our suggestion is this; be as generous as you can be. For some that will mean 3%. For others 5%. And through careful stewardship over time, a person can increase those percentages as the Lord

directs them. But, what is wise and honoring is to have a plan to give proportionally and not randomly.

WHAT IS MY MONEY USED FOR?

Your money is used to pursue the calling that God has given to this church. When you give to Salem Church, your money is used to help more people be transformed into fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Your dollars become ministry fuel. And when the Holy Spirit creates the spark, all kinds of activity results. Children are loved and taught, teens are guided, adults are challenged, the Gospel is preached, the lost are reached, those in need are supplied, the sick are cared for, those in prison are visited, and through it all, God is glorified. Salem practices an open book policy. Any individual can look at financial reports that are generated on a regular basis and ask questions to assure that proper management and accounting practices are being utilized.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO GIVE?

This is certainly your choice. However, the prophet Malachi, in the Old Testament, taught that to withhold your generosity was to mismanage what God has entrusted to you. Be generous, he taught, and God will open up the floodgates of Heaven and pour out blessing into your lives. And remember Paul's words that whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly but whoever sows generously will also reap generously. So a person is free to choose to not give, but why would a person want to do that? And the idea here is that if all of us partner together, each of us contributing in proportion with our income (everyone gives the same percentage, regardless of income totals), then at the end of the day, we can look each other in the eye and rejoice together from full hearts knowing that each of us contributed what we were able.

Should I give both an offering and make a commitment to the campaign? Yes. The campaign funds are separate from the weekly general funds. And the call of the campaign is to be faithful with our giving to the general fund while sacrificially contributing to the campaign. For reference, it takes about \$11,000 a week in the general budget to maintain the ministries and emphasis of the church.