

What is percentage giving?

Answer: It simply means selecting and giving a percentage of your income as part of your worship.

First, select a percentage that you are blessed to be able to give cheerfully in grateful response to God's love. There are no rules or laws here. If you desire and can give 50%, then give 50%. If only 5%, then 5%. If at anytime in the year, blessings increase or decrease, you would adjust your giving proportionally. It helps to have a budget and to know your monthly expenses in case you need to adjust them in order to make your gift. To be sure, you may be prompted to make life changes to reduce your expenses (indeed, making sacrifices) so that you are able to give a thoughtful and orderly amount. If you can no longer afford certain activities you were enjoying, perhaps this is an opportunity to dedicate time to study, prayer, and service to others.

Examples

A family of three with a annual income of \$40,000 prayerfully determined they would start giving 5%. This equates to \$2000 (roughly \$40/week).

An individual with a \$60,000 salary prayerfully determined that she could give 15% of her income. This equates to \$9000 (roughly \$175/week).

A family earning \$200,000 prayerfully determined that they could give 25%. This equates to \$50,000 (roughly \$1000/week).

Can I really do this?

After reading this brochure, some may conclude that their giving has been far too haphazard and, out of gratitude to God, begin giving a thoughtful and orderly amount. Praise be to God! Others may desire to give more but seriously struggle each month and feel overwhelmed with the thought of giving a percentage. To you we humbly suggest speaking to one of the pastors and/or to review your giving again in a few months after prayer and meditation. Above all, remember this: **"Fear not...it is your Father's pleasure to give you the Kingdom!"** (Luke 12:32). And: **"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise"** (Psalm 51:17).



What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits to me?

Some answers to questions about Christian giving.

The questions and answers were adapted from "Questions and Answers on Christian Giving" by the Rev. Prof. Kurt Marquart.

Tel: (865) 524-0366

Web: www.firstknoxville.org

What is Christian giving?

Answer: Worship.

The only correct view of giving is that our offerings are part of our worship, our service to God. God saved us by His Gospel, not simply that we might sit and wait for eternity, but that we might be a **“holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices”** (1 Pet. 2:5). The whole life of Christians as priests of God is a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). And since much of our life has to do with money, it must be included in our life of sacrifice. To be sure, it is a small part of our worship compared to such other spiritual sacrifices as faith itself, patience, and forgiveness toward others, for Christ’s sake, the incense of public and private devotion to God, and so on. But just because money is small compared to the really great things in the Christian life, let no one imagine that money doesn’t matter.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” (Lk 16:10-11).

How much should I give?

Answer: A thoughtful and orderly amount.

In the Old Testament, the faithful were commanded by God to give the tithe (10%) of their net income to the church. Consider Malachi 3:8-12:

“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. ... In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse. Bring the full tithe ... [Then see] if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ... Then all nations will call you blessed ... says the LORD of hosts.”

Note especially the promise of blessing for compliance and the threat of divine curse for non-compliance.

In the New Testament, we are not bound by the ceremonial law. But shall we, who have greater gifts from God, serve Him less zealously than His Old Testament people? The tithe is a good starting point, and many Christians tithe and find joy and blessing in the practice, even material blessing. But we must remember that material gain must never be a purpose in our giv-

ing—else it is mockery—though it may please God to give it to us as a result.

In determining how much we shall allot to God through His church, we must not think of “our fair share” because that is a form of merely “meeting the budget.” In our giving we must forget about others, how much they are or should be doing. We must not think, for example, that if the budget is \$100, and there are 100 members, “our fair share” is \$1. If I am a poor widow living with others and without any income, even \$1 is too much. But if I am a prosperous farmer or business professional and earn thousands per year, even \$100 is too little under some circumstances. It all depends. We shall not make any laws for one another.

Whatever our situation, St. Paul writes: **“On the first day of every week, let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper...”** (1 Cor. 16:2). In other words, we are to give in proportion to our income. In every case it should be a sacrifice; and giving away what we don’t need anyway is not a sacrifice.