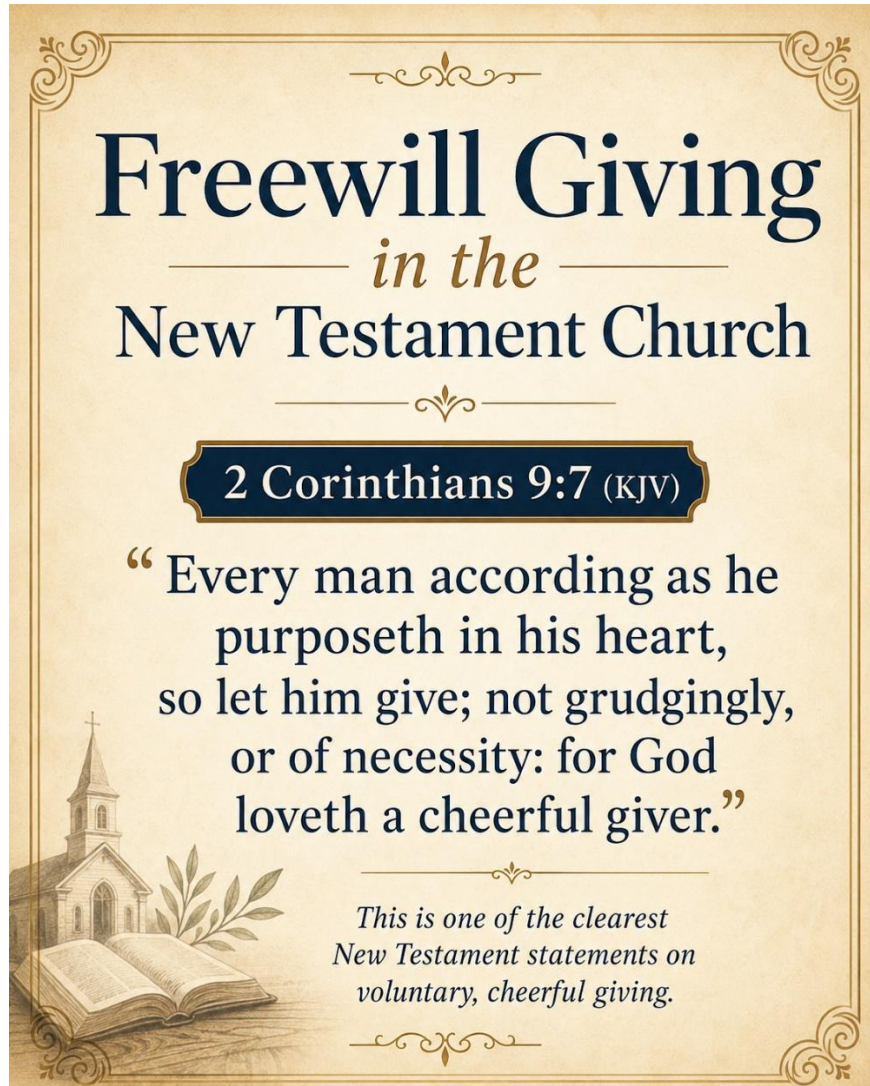


APOSTOLIC CHURCH GIVING

Apostolic Guidelines for
How and Where You Should Give



The Historic Apostolic Perspective on Church Giving
And Refuting the Modern Man-Made Traditions

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Introduction

A Bible Study on Grace, Compassion, and Caring for the Needs of the Church

Apostolic giving is not the same thing as modern tithing. In the New Testament Church, giving was not presented as a legal tax, a mandatory ten percent payment, or a system designed only to support one minister. Giving was an act of grace, love, fellowship, compassion, and obedience to the needs of the body of Christ.

The Apostles never once taught, collected, or paid tithes in the New Testament Church. Not once. Paul wrote extensively about giving, material support, financial assistance, and ministerial support, yet he never commanded tithing even a single time. In fact, Paul spoke more about working with his own hands than he ever did about tithing. When money was involved, his highest concern was that the gospel would not be blamed, hindered, or made to look like a means of personal gain. For that reason, Paul said he would rather labor with his own hands than misuse his liberty or become a burden to the saints. That is a very different spirit from what is often seen in churches today, where giving is sometimes treated as an obligation to sustain religious systems rather than as grace-filled support for the gospel, the needy, and the household of faith.

It is right for the people of God to support the work of the ministry. Ministers who labor in the Word are worthy of support. The gospel should be supplied, the work of God should be helped, and those who truly give themselves to the ministry should not be neglected. But apostolic giving was never limited to the pastor alone. The New Testament pattern includes care for widows, fatherless children, the poor, needy saints, struggling brothers and sisters, traveling ministers, missionaries, and the work of the gospel.

The modern idea that all giving belongs automatically to one man or one pulpit is not the apostolic pattern. The Church is a body. The needs of the body matter. The poor matter. The widow matters. The fatherless matter. The struggling family matters. The brother or sister in crisis matters. The ministry matters also, but not to the exclusion of the rest of the household of faith.

Apostolic giving is not built on compulsion, fear, manipulation, or the threat of a curse. It is built on love.

Paul wrote:

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7, KJV

That is the spirit of New Testament giving.

Not grudgingly.

Not of necessity.

Not under legal bondage.

Not under threat.

Not of guilt or shame.

Not to avoid curses, or to obtain blessings.

But willingly, cheerfully, and according to the grace of God working in the heart.

From a heart of compassion and a sincere desire to help others.

Wherever the Lord leads or the need arises.



1. The New Testament Church Did Not Practice Mandatory Tithing

Under the Law of Moses, tithing belonged to Israel's covenant system. It was tied to the land, the Levitical priesthood, the temple service, agricultural increase, and the old covenant economy. The tithe was not simply a universal ten percent church payment. It belonged to the Law.

The New Testament teaches that the Law was fulfilled in Christ. We do not return to the old covenant system in order to govern the New Testament Church.

Paul warned:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

— Galatians 5:1, KJV

In the context of tithing, the writer of Hebrews also says:

“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

— Hebrews 7:18, KJV

Tithing was canceled at the cross. The old covenant priesthood was changed. The law connected to that priesthood was changed. Jesus Christ is now our High Priest. The Church is not under the Levitical order. We are not bringing agricultural tithes to Levites at the temple. We are living under the New Covenant in Jesus Christ.

It should be noted here that the apostles never once taught, took, or paid tithes. It should also be noted that the Old Testament tithe does not even remotely resemble the modern church monetary tithe. It was dragged across covenant lines, drastically reinvented, and does not have any similarity to its Old Testament predecessor that ministers claim is the example and justification for taking monetary church tithes today.

That does not mean Christians should be selfish. It does not mean the work of God should be neglected. It does not mean ministers should receive no support. It means giving must be understood according to the Apostolic pattern, not according to a revised old covenant tithe system made obsolete by the sacrificial blood of the Lamb.

New Testament giving is freewill, generous, Spirit-led, need-based, and grace-centered.

2. Apostolic Giving Was for the Whole Body

The first picture of giving in the New Testament Church is not a tithe line. It is a body of believers caring for one another.

After Pentecost, the believers were joined together in fellowship, doctrine, prayer, and mutual care:

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men,
as every man had need.”

— Acts 2:44–45, KJV

Notice the phrase:

“as every man had need.”

The giving was directed toward need. It was not only directed toward a preacher. It was not only directed toward a building. It was not only directed toward a pulpit or platform. The believers cared for one another.

Again, Acts says:

“Neither was there any among them that lacked:
for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them,
and brought the prices of the things that were sold,
And laid them down at the apostles’ feet:
and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

— Acts 4:34–35, KJV

Again the pattern is clear:

“according as he had need.”

This is apostolic giving. The early Church did not ignore the needy while leaders lived in comfort. The purpose of giving was not to enrich a privileged class. The purpose was to care for the people of God and advance the work of God.

If a brother lacked food, the Church cared.

If a widow lacked support, the Church cared.

If a family was in need, the Church cared.

If the gospel work needed help, the Church cared.

Apostolic giving was not selfish. It was not narrow. It was not controlled by greed. It was love in action.

3. God Has Always Cared About Widows, Fatherless Children, and the Poor

Even under the Old Testament, God's concern was never limited to priests. The Law repeatedly commanded care for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Moses wrote:

"At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

And the Levite, because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied..."

— Deuteronomy 14:28–29, KJV

This is important. Even in the Law, the tithe was not only for ministers. The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were included. God never designed giving to ignore the vulnerable.

Again:

"When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled."

— Deuteronomy 26:12, KJV

If even the old covenant recognized the needs of the widow, fatherless, stranger, and poor, how much more should the New Testament Church care for them under the law of Christ?

James wrote:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

— James 1:27, KJV

Pure religion is not proven by how much money is collected for a luxurious lifestyle. Pure religion is seen in holiness and compassion. It visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction. It keeps itself unspotted from the world.

A church that boasts of giving while neglecting widows, fatherless children, and needy saints has missed the heart of God. Yet today, we do not see our tithes being distributed among the needy in the church.

4. The Apostles Organized Care for Widows

In Acts chapter 6, the early Church faced a real problem. Certain widows were being neglected in the daily ministration.

The Bible says:

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.”

— Acts 6:1, KJV

The apostles did not say, “That does not matter.” They did not say, “All money belongs only to the preachers.” They did not say, “Widows are not part of the ministry.” They took the matter seriously and appointed faithful men to oversee the need.

The care of widows was a real ministry of the Church.

This is a major apostolic pattern. The Church had a responsibility to make sure vulnerable believers were not neglected. The apostles protected the preaching of the Word, but they also made sure the needs of widows were addressed properly.

Apostolic ministry includes both truth and compassion.

The Word must be preached.

Prayer must continue.

The saints must be cared for.

The needy must not be forgotten.

5. The Church Has a Duty to Help Needy Saints

Paul gave direct instruction concerning the needs of believers.

He wrote:

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.”

— Romans 12:13, KJV

The saints have necessities. The Church is commanded to distribute to those necessities.

Paul also wrote:

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

— Galatians 6:10, KJV

Christians should do good to all men, but there is a special responsibility toward the household of faith. Brothers and sisters in the Church are not strangers. They are family. If a member of the body is suffering, the rest of the body should care.

John wrote:

“But whoso hath this world’s good,
and seeth his brother have need,
and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him,
how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

— 1 John 3:17, KJV

This is a serious verse. If a person has the ability to help and sees his brother in need but shuts up compassion, John asks how the love of God dwells in him.

That applies to individuals.

It also applies to churches.

It is not apostolic to demand money from the poor while refusing to help them in their distress. It is not apostolic to place heavy financial burdens on struggling saints while ignoring their needs. It is not apostolic for leaders to live comfortably or luxuriously while the widows, fatherless, and poor in the congregation are left unsupported.

The love of God must be seen in action.

John continued:

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue;
but in deed and in truth.”

— 1 John 3:18, KJV

Apostolic giving is love in deed and in truth.

6. Ministers May Be Supported, but Ministry Support Is Not the Whole Purpose of Giving

The New Testament does teach that ministers may be supported. Paul wrote:

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”

— 1 Corinthians 9:14, KJV

He also wrote:

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

— 1 Timothy 5:17, KJV

So we should not swing to the opposite extreme and say ministers should never be helped. True ministers who labor faithfully in the Word and give themselves to the work of God are worthy of support.

But support for ministry does not cancel the Church’s duty to the poor. It does not erase the needs of widows. It does not remove the responsibility to help struggling brothers and sisters. It does not mean every dollar belongs to one man. Often, after paying our 10% tithe to pastor, there is little or nothing left to give to the equally weighty needs of others.

Paul himself was careful not to use ministry as a cloak for greed. He warned against covetousness and refused to make merchandise of the saints.

He told the Ephesian elders:

“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.”

— Acts 20:33, KJV

Then he said:

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

— Acts 20:35, KJV

This is powerful. When Paul spoke to elders, he did not teach them to exploit the Church. He taught them to support the weak.

That is apostolic leadership.

A pastor should not be greedy. A pastor should not use giving as a tool to live above the people while the poor are neglected. A pastor may receive support, but he is also supposed to be an example of generosity, humility, and care for the weak. Biblically speaking, it is not wrong for the pastor to have a job to lighten the burden of the church.

Peter warned elders:

“Feed the flock of God which is among you,
taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly;
not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
Neither as being lords over God’s heritage,
but being ensamples to the flock.”

— 1 Peter 5:2–3, KJV

The flock belongs to God. The people are not a revenue stream. They are God’s heritage.

7. Giving Must Not Be Manipulated by Fear or Greed

New Testament giving must come from the heart. It is not forced by threats. It is not extracted through fear. It is not produced by telling people they are cursed if they do not give a certain percentage to the pastor or church institution.

Paul wrote:

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7, KJV

This one verse destroys the spirit of forced giving.

“Not grudgingly.”

“Or of necessity.”

God loves a cheerful giver.

Apostolic giving is purposeful, willing, generous, and cheerful. It is not grudging. It is not compulsory. It is not a legal tax. It is not a religious payment system controlled by fear.

Paul also taught proportional giving according to ability:

“For if there be first a willing mind,
it is accepted according to that a man hath,
and not according to that he hath not.”

— 2 Corinthians 8:12, KJV

God does not require what a man does not have. Giving should not crush the poor. It should not shame struggling families. It should not place impossible burdens on those already in need.

The New Testament pattern is grace, willingness, and equality:

“For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:
But by an equality...”

— 2 Corinthians 8:13–14, KJV

Paul’s purpose was not that one group be burdened while another group lived easy. He wanted the abundance of one to help the lack of another. That is apostolic giving.

8. Apostolic Giving Is Need-Based, Grace-Based, and Body-Based

The New Testament pattern of giving can be summarized simply.

Apostolic giving is **need-based**:

“Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

— Acts 4:35, KJV

Apostolic giving is **grace-based**:

“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.”

— 2 Corinthians 8:1, KJV

Apostolic giving is **willing**:

“For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.”

— 2 Corinthians 8:3, KJV

Apostolic giving is **cheerful**:

“God loveth a cheerful giver.”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7, KJV

Apostolic giving is **for the saints**:

“For as touching the ministering to the saints...”

— 2 Corinthians 9:1, KJV

Apostolic giving is **for the weak**:

“Ye ought to support the weak...”

— Acts 20:35, KJV

Apostolic giving is **for the household of faith**:

“Especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

— Galatians 6:10, KJV

This is very different from a system where money flows upward while needs remain unmet below.

The Church is not supposed to be a place where the wealthy are honored, the minister is enriched, and the poor are forgotten. The Church is supposed to be a family under Christ, where the body cares for itself according to love, wisdom, order, and truth.

Conclusion

Apostolic giving is not modern tithing. It is not a legal demand placed upon the saints under threat of a curse. It is not a system designed only to support one man. It is not a tool for religious luxury or ministerial pride.

Apostolic giving is the grace of God working through the people of God to meet the needs of the body of Christ and advance the work of the gospel.

It is right to help the ministry.

It is right to support faithful ministers.

It is right to supply the work of God.

But it is also right to help widows.

It is right to help the fatherless.

It is right to help the poor.

It is right to help needy brothers and sisters.

It is right to support the weak.

It is right to distribute to the necessity of saints.

The New Testament Church gave according to need, according to ability, according to willingness, and according to love. They did not give because they were cursed if they did not. They gave because the love of God had changed their hearts.

The Apostolic pattern is not greed.

It is grace.

It is not compulsion.

It is compassion.

It is not bondage.

It is brotherly love.

Therefore, the Church must recover Apostolic giving. We must reject the misuse of old covenant tithing as a burden placed upon New Covenant believers. We must refuse systems that enrich leaders while neglecting the needy. We must honor faithful ministry without forgetting the widows, the fatherless, the poor, the weak, and the struggling members of the household of faith.

This is pure religion.

This is New Testament giving.

This is the Apostolic way.