

Something to Pray About

By Cindy Sears – December 2009

"TITHING"

⁸Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, "How are we robbing you?" In your tithes and offerings! ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! ¹⁰Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing... --Malachi 3:8-10 (NRSV).

Ten Points About Tithing

Tithe means 10.

The tithe is given to God immediately or as soon as possible after receiving the income.

The tithe symbolizes God's ownership of everything.

The tithe comes off the top—before taxes, bills, savings or anything else.

Tithing is a universal and timeless principle. It is not from the law, but came before the law was given. (See Genesis 14:17-20)

The tithe predates and continues after the law—for every man and woman for all ages. It is not abrogated by the law of grace.

The tithe has been practiced throughout church history.

Tithing is the thermometer of spiritual vitality. You cannot serve two masters: God and mammon.

The tithe is important to God—don't mess with what belongs to God!

The tithe—10%--is the starting place of New Testament giving, but not the final place of giving. Offerings are gifts over and above the required 10% and are freewill contributions. You cannot give an offering until after you have given 10%--the tithe. Offerings come from surplus.

Disobedience in tithes and offerings is stealing from God. We have to step out and trust God first. Giving 10% of our incomes off the top is a step of faith and a test of our trust and belief in God and in His ability and willingness to provide us with all we truly need.

National average percentage of income given to churches among born-again adults is 3.8% (2003). **But that is from the 7% of born-again adults who give to the church at all.** Nearly twice as many born-again adults don't give anything at all to the church (18%).

The amount that God asks us to give: 10%

The amount that God owns: 100%

The amount that is left for us to manage for God and His kingdom's work: 90%

Definitions:

Giving: any amount below 10% of gross income; any amount given by a non-believer.

Tithing: 10% of income off the top—before taxes, necessities, savings or anything else.

Offering: any amount over 10% of gross income.

The amount that you can give each year and receive a tax benefit: 50% of gross income.

The amount that you can take with you when you die: 0%.

Jesus spoke about money more than He talked about Heaven and Hell combined. He must believe it is important. Why? "You cannot serve two masters." Just how much do you truly TRUST God?

—Cindy Sears

