

How God Wants Us to Give

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There is nothing more basic to Christianity than giving. Salvation through Christ and His church is the result of God's inestimable gift of His only begotten Son (John. 3:16). The Christ "loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph. 5:2). God is a most generous giver by nature, and we can't be His faithful children without following His glorious example as closely as possible. He not only teaches us to give by His example, but also by His precept. He does it not merely for the glory it brings Him and the good it does for others, but because of the great blessing it brings to us when we learn to give generously. Five essential factors sum up how God wants us to give:

1. **The Right Period: "Upon the first day of the week"** (1 Cor. 16:2). Every Lord's day brings to the Christian the incomparable privilege of coming together with other saints to praise and magnify God. An indispensable part of this privilege is the opportunity to give some of our money to God. As often as we have this opportunity and duty (each Lord's day) we are instructed to perform it.
2. **The Right People: "Each one of you"** (1 Cor. 16:2). This phrase includes every Christian, from the widow on a pension to the teenage boy or girl who receives an allowance or who has a part-time job and from the man who is at the peak of his career and earning power to the couple who is having to adjust to a fixed-income retirement and all who are in between. "If I were rich ..." is an idle thought. We are all commanded to give, whatever our level of income might be.
3. **The Right Place: "Lay by him in store"** (1 Cor. 16:2). This phrase literally means to place it in the common treasury or collection. This is God's plan for financing the work He has given the church to do. A group of people who combine their resources can do many great things for God that one family alone could not do. As members of a local congregation our first loyalty in our giving must ever be directed toward it.
4. **The Right Proportion: "As he may prosper"** (1 Cor. 16:2). Unlike the tithing of the Old Testament, no set percentage of our income is commanded in the New Testament. Rather, we are left on our honor, to be guided by the law of love and the grace of generosity. Our gift must be a worthy proportion of our income.
5. **The Right Preparation: "As he hath purposed in his heart"** (2 Cor. 9:7). Acceptable giving requires sober planning. We dare not relegate this vital Christian duty to mere accident or mere momentary impulse.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, September 2, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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