

I get it, supporting any organization financially is a really big deal. It takes a whole lot of trust and a whole lot of commitment. The local church is one of the oldest crowd funded movements in human history. It will always be this way. We know that God isn't out to get people's money but rather He wants to prevent our money from getting us. Everytime we give, we are telling our money, "I don't serve you, but you serve me." Allow me to briefly share why we invite people to take their next step in becoming a growing giver at SMCC.

I think that a really good reason to give to SMCC is that we are YOUR CHURCH. In 1 Corinthians 9 the Apostle Paul clearly states that it is the responsibility of those in the church to support the ministry of the church. Look at verses 13 and 14 with me... *"Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."*

The support of the "priests" during the Old Covenant and days in which the worship of God included Temples and Priests and animal sacrifices, the Jewish people were to give 10% of all their crops and animals to the LORD by supporting the Priests. The statement "In the same way..." points to the carry over of this practice of making giving a PRIORITY, to give a PERCENTAGE (goal = 10%), and to give PROGRESSIVELY (be a growing giver) more and more as the Lord prospers you (10%+ = generosity). "the Lord has commanded..." points to the idea that this is something that Jesus taught and commanded even if we don't read an explicit statement of this in the Gospels. In ancient culture, 10% support was a mark of honor. Essentially, it wasn't religion that created a "tithe" but honor that did. We invite people to simply start somewhere in their giving, 10% is the wise boundary that helps us enjoy financial faithfulness.

Another reason, and perhaps the primary reason, to give is found throughout the Bible. We give because this is a primary way to demonstrate to God that He is God and that I worship and serve and love Him alone. Jesus said that MONEY is the primary challenger to God for our affections and trust. See Matthew 6:24. Every time we give we proclaim that Jesus is Lord, not our money and possessions.

Lastly, I think a good reason to give to SMCC is because we are carrying out the mission of God on earth. Since Christ rose from the dead the local church has had the responsibility to carry out His great commission (make disciples of all nations). There are many other worthy causes, but the local church is specifically designed, equipped and empowered to do this work best. When you think about it, most other organizations are committed to some sort of relief, rescue or rehabilitation. The church is dedicated to be the preventative mechanism for God in culture so that families and individuals do not need relief, rescue, and rehabilitation. Supporting your local church is a proactive way to support human flourishing.

At SMCC we have never encouraged our people to give out of obligation or duty. We recognize that financial transparency matters to you. Please reach out to me personally with any questions you might have about 'where the money goes'. We understand that God doesn't love you more if you give and love

you less if you don't. He doesn't wait for us to do anything that would somehow qualify for His love... He simply loves us. Would you consider asking God to help you become a joyful, growing giver. Truly, everything I have ever read about generosity shows that HAPPY PEOPLE give the most. Giving is a crucial way for us to develop "full devotion and full delight in Jesus Christ." And that is what we want for all of you.

*Eric Nelson*

**Lead Pastor of SMCC**