

The Worshipful Act of Monetary Giving to the Local Church

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Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross to die so that He might ransom men and redeem them to Himself in a saving, eternal, reconciled relationship. If Jesus Christ has given so much for us, should we not be willing to give sacrificially to Him?

In what follows, I hope to provide a number of helpful ways you can worshipfully give:

1. Give Generously!

Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost. The initiative was His. The death of Christ sufficiently saves from the penalty of sin. Jesus Christ gave Himself fully, physically, and sacrificially so that you may be pardoned in Him! If Jesus Christ has given so much for you, what a wonderful privilege to give generously back to Him! Those who have money in this world are to be instructed to do good, to be rich in good works *and to be generous* and ready to share (1 Tim 6:18). Even the character of God is such that he is generous with those whom He saves (Matt 20:15). So the glorious opportunity is ours to give generously to the Lord's ministry.

2. Give Sacrificially!

On the evening before our Lord was crucified, He commanded His disciples to prepare the Passover dinner. It was here that He reminded them again that He would give His body *for* His people (Luke 22:19). Indeed, He would shed His blood *for* His people (Luke 22:20). And according to Hebrews 9:26, Jesus put away sin once and for all through the sacrifice of Himself. By means of the sacrifice of Christ, His people are free and no longer slaves of sin because Christ was offered once to completely and fully bear the sins of many. If Jesus Christ gave so much — sacrificially — of Himself to redeem His people, how much more of a glorious privilege do we have to give sacrificially back to Him. This is why the Apostle Paul writes that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Cor 9:6).

3. Give Joyfully!

It was for the joy that was set before Christ that He endured the cross, scorned its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the Father. Jesus joyfully gave Himself to redeem sinful man. Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them that He longed for *His joy* to be *in them* (John 15:11). So much did Jesus desire their fullness of joy that He prayed to His Father that His followers may have the fullness of His joy in themselves (John 17:13). Christ willingly sacrificed. He joyfully endured. He happily lived. He gave of Himself joyfully so that His followers would have His joy in them till their joy is complete in heaven. So then, we as believers have the utmost opportunity to give of our ourselves and all that we have — including our financial resources — to the Lord. In the context of financial giving, Paul writes that God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7).

4. Give Expectantly!

The believers in NT churches gave financially and expected the Lord to use it for His glory. The financial gifts were given to messengers who took the money from one church/city to another and they expected the money to bear fruit, increase the Lord's harvest, and glorify Him. In Philippians 4:17 Paul says to the Church in Philippi after they gave a generous gift to care for spiritual needs that he seeks not only the gift itself but the profit which increases to their account. They gave sacrificially and expectantly that God would provide. An account in Acts 4 reminds us of how sacrificial the Church was in sharing and giving to the Lord's work and to help others in need when Luke writes: For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need (Acts 4:34-35). So we have the wonderful blessing of affirming 2 Cor 9:10: Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

5. Give Prayerfully!

When a Christian has the privilege of partnering with the Lord in the advancement of His gospel in both the local & global contexts, he should give prayerfully. There should be a prayerfulness in the following regards: (1) a thankfulness that God has richly and graciously provided the financial means to give generously, (2) a petition that God would use these funds for His glory and for the furthering of the Lord's work, (3) a consecration that God would protect our hearts as we give so that we would shun all greediness and also ask the Lord for more opportunities to give in the future, and (4) a doxology of praise so that may be preeminently exalted through this monetary gift. Furthermore, we should praise, worship, honor, and glorify God as we give and this can express itself in prayerful praise and jubilant worship!

6. Give Gospel-Centeredly!

And we as believers are called to abound in this gracious work also (2 Cor 8:7). A wonderful help that can guide in making decisions on who or where to give to can center around the incorporation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the gift. Giving to an organization about 'bettering' humanity is one thing but having the opportunity to support a ministry that is concerned about helping others materially and a primary goal of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they may repent, believe, and grow in their discipleship is quite another. Let us be devoted to giving gospel-centeredly. May God use our gifts to cause the gospel to flourish and grow rapidly. May we give richly and generously from the overflow of our own hearts that have received the saving grace of Christ who gave up everything for us so that we might gain everything in Him.

7. Give Thankfully!

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is marvelous. Though He was rich, He became poor for our sake so that we through His poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). What a marvelous sacrifice that eternally purchased sinful rebels and transferred them into the Kingdom of Light! This results in all the spiritual blessings that God has being channeled on to the believer through Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3-5). And so, the Christian who has received the saving mercies of Jesus Christ and who is eternally thankful to God for saving sinners should evidence his thankfulness to the Lord in giving of what he has up to the Lord. Monetary giving in the local church is one way to prove the genuineness of your love for Christ and for others (2 Cor 8:8).