

mindful to not worry about our lives, what we will eat and what we will drink.

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?; And why do you worry about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?”... But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:26-31,33)

So, if God will always provide for us, we need not allow our personal financial challenges to hinder us from giving to God what God deserves, via our tithes and offerings. We need not rob God of the weekly or monthly commitment we promise to make, because the more we give to God, the more we shall certainly receive.

The Church and Money

Some persons may say that the church does not need money to function. However, let us not forget that in the early church, collections were received for two main purposes:

1. To offset the travelling expenses of Paul and to support his ministry - as a fulltime minister of the Church - as he moved about from place to place to do the work of God. (1 Corinthians 9:1-15)
2. Provide food and care for the Church of Jerusalem, especially the poor, who had suffered a great famine. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.

In a similar way, the Church of today uses the collec-

tion received to support the ministries of the church to care and provide for the needy, to enable the ministry of church leaders to our members, and to maintain/sustain the church as a place of worship. Remember that it is God's Church, and so when we give out tithes, we are enabling the mission and work of God to take place.

Difference between “Tithe” and “Offering”

There is a simple difference between the two. An Offering is what we give to God, be it directly (as an expression of thanks) or indirectly to assist others (with tuition, food, or someone who has suffered a major disaster). As it relates to our Tithe, this is the money/collection we commit ourselves to give to God on a systematic basis (be it weekly or monthly for instance), as an expression of our gratitude to God for all that God continues to do for us. While some persons may prefer to give a tenth of their earnings, tithing is based on the principle, that as we are blessed, so it is that we are to give back to God. Whatever the principle we use, we should be guided by God to give as we are led by the Holy Spirit to do.

Conclusion

Money is given to us by God for us to manage prudently as stewards. As we do so, we should remember that out of what God has given to us, we are expected to give back what is due to God. We should not rob God! When we give to God as we should, God promises to open the flood gates of heaven, such that we do not have room enough to store the blessings we receive. Remember, “the more we give, the more we receive.” (2 Cor. 9:6). So, never hesitate to give your tithe to God; never hesitate to provide help to others. God is faithful, and will always provide for us. “Freely Give, freely receive.”

*Prepared by Rev. Orlando Gayle (2023)
for The Diocese of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands.*

Why should we Tithe as Members of the Body of Christ?



Give as the Lord has blessed you, not grudgingly, but as a sense of duty, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Money and Stewardship

Stewardship can be defined as:

- (a) managing and caring for things that belong to someone else.
- (b) safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly.
- (c) the generous giving of time, talent, and treasure.

The person tasked with such responsibilities is called a steward, a manager or an overseer. Being a Christian Steward means more. As Christian Stewards we should receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord. Therefore, Christian Stewardship is the Christian's response of love and thankfulness to the redemptive love of God in Jesus Christ. [BCP. 404].

As it relates, to our financial resources, we need to understand that money is a gift from God. In other words, it is God who enables us to have this precious commodity. Therefore, what we do with it, and the way in which we manage it as stewards, are therefore very important. The prayer for the presentation of the offerings at the altar is very instructive, as we collectively pray, "Father, we offer You these gifts which you have given us. This bread, this wine, this money." Money therefore should not be squandered. It is given to us by God to be managed in a responsible way – be it personal, business or for religious purposes – and we must remember to give back to God, out of that which God has given to us, as an expression of our gratitude/thankfulness for what God has done and continues to do for us as a people. We should also be mindful, that tithing is a reflection of our spirituality as a people; that is it is a demonstration of the strength of our relationship with God.

Giving Back to God as an Expression of Thanks

Form A of the Prayer over the Offerings for Holy Communion on Page 126 of *The Book of Common Prayer* reminds us that "All things come from you O Lord, and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God forever." This is a vivid reminder to us of the fact, that all that we possess belong to God, and so out of that which God has blessed us, we should always seek to give something back to God, as an expression of our gratitude for all that God has done for us. In doing so, this money that we give back to God, becomes an expression of us giving ourselves to God. Therefore, in Form B on page 126, we further state, that "...With them (bread, wine and money), we offer ourselves, our lives and our works to become through your Holy Spirit, a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice..." So, the tithe and offering we present, they should be true representations of what God deserves, based on our conscience and based on what we earn.

When we think of the fact that we all go through different challenges, and how faithful God is to all of us, it is for this very reason, we must remember to express our gratitude to God by giving back to God. This we do via the principle of tithing as demonstrated in Genesis 28:22 and Leviticus 27:32. So, regardless of the hardship we face, we cannot deny the fact that God continues to bless us, and so as we are blessed, we should give back something to God (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Proverbs 3:9 puts it nicely, "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first-fruits of all your increase." So, what have you been giving back to God? When we think of what God has done for us, and what we give back as our tithe, is God really deserving of the amount that we give, based on that which we

are earning?

We are robbing God when we fail to tithe!

As Christians, we are called to give to God what is due to God. Our failure to do so, will result in us demonstrating a lack of gratitude to God for what God has done for us. In fact, Malachi 3:8-10, in addressing the lax religious and social behaviour of the Israelites - who having just come out of the Babylonian Exile - emphasizes that they had become too comfortable in their lives, such that they forgot God's goodness to them, and were not paying their tithes and offerings. So, in a call to remind the Israelites, to live faithfully before God, the Prophet Malachi asked,

"Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, 'How are we robbing you?' In your tithes and offerings! You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! Bring 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 an overflowing blessing. (Malachi 3:8-10)

There is no need for us to be robbing God with our tithes, because this passage also reminds us that God will open the flood gates of heaven, so that we will not have sufficient place to store it. The phrase *Freely give Freely receive* should come to mind. *The more we give to God, the more we will receive from Him.*

God will provide

We therefore should never get to the point in our lives where we say we cannot tithe because we cannot afford it. God will always provide our needs, and this is what Matthew 6:25-34 reminds us of, as we are re-