

### What the Bible says about giving?

The following notes provide some insight into what the Bible says about giving. Before you begin, please know that God doesn't care about your money and neither do we. Psalm 49 teaches us that there is no amount of money that can save someone from hell or gain God's approval. God is interested in your heart, not your checkbook. At Damascus Road, however, we believe that the chief end of man is to bring glory to God in all that we do and we believe this includes how we spend our money. Do not mistake this brief explanation is for a comprehensive study of all the Bible has to say about money or giving. The purpose of these notes are to answer some frequently asked questions regarding what, why, and how a Christian should give. We trust that you will prayerfully consider all we have written, study God's word yourself, and pray as you seek to bring glory to God in all areas of your life.



### What is a tithe?

Literally, the "tithe" is a tenth of the produce of the earth or labor consecrated and set apart for special purposes. Dedicating a tenth to God was recognized as a duty before the time of Moses. In Genesis 14:18-20, Abraham pays the first tithe to a priest named Melchizedek. Hebrews 7 indicates that Abraham's tithe consisted of "a tenth part of everything." Moreover, in Genesis 28:22, Jacob vows a tenth of all of his property to God. It is not until over 400 years later, when Israel is organized as a nation under the leadership of Moses, that God legislates tithing for His people. The various laws governing tithing are spelled out in the book of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In the Old Testament, for the purposes of the Israelite nation, there appear to be three distinguishable types of tithes:

- 1) An annual tithe for the support of the Levites, the tabernacle/temple workers (Lev 27:30-33; Num 18:21-24). This was the only visible means of support for them, since they inherited no land when Canaan was conquered under Joshua. The Levites, in turn, passed along a tithe of this tithe to the priests, the highest echelon of worship leaders (Num 18:26).
- 2) An annual feast tithe, which apparently went for the support of the house of God and its services (Deut 14:22-27).
- 3) A "social ministry" tithe, received every third year, for helping the poor and needy (Deut 14:28; 26:12).

### Who should and shouldn't tithe?

Repentant Christians should tithe. Those who fully understand the gospel and those who believe the gospel will desire to confess their belief through their giving (2Cor 9:6-15). A heart of giving is evidence of a transformed heart demonstrating the truth of the gospel. Conversely, those who are actively living in unrepentant sin should not tithe. God values confession and repentance more than sacrifice. Your responsibility is to get right with God by confessing your sin, accepting His gracious forgiveness, and turning from what you know is wrong as you pursue godliness. Finally, those who do not yet believe in the gospel should not tithe. God cannot be bought. The Bible says that even your "good gift" of money is viewed as nothing more than filthy rags in His eyes

(Isaiah 64.6). God, along with all at Damascus Road, hope that you will not give but receive the free gift of salvation found in Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

### **Was the Old Testament tithe 10%?**

The tithe is an Old Testament concept. The tithe was a requirement of the law in which all Israelites were to give 10% of everything they earned—or the crops and animals they grew—to the Tabernacle / Temple (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:24; 2 Chronicles 31:5). The tithe paid for the day-to-day operations of what amounted to a theocracy. God ruled and priests served as they ministered to the people of God. If one adds up all of the “contributions” of the typical Israelite—the basic tithes, firstfruit offerings, special almsgiving, prescribed sacrifices, specially vowed offerings, dedicatory offerings, free-will offerings, sacrifices, thanksgiving, and the half-shekel temple tax—it is conservatively estimated that the Israelite gave approximately 33% of his income.

### **What does the New Testament say about Tithing?**

Believers in Christ are not commanded to legalistically give 10% of their income although historically it has been employed as a minimum standard. Although it is a convenient standard of reference we should not be legalistic about giving. Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser once said, *“if a tenth was the minimal amount under the Law, how can Christians do any less? Perhaps we should consider not how little but how much we can give, seeing how richly blessed we are in Christ.”* A survey of the New Testament evidences a number of different principles we can employ guide us in our decision about how much we should give whether it be 10% or 50%:

- 1) **Am I giving regularly?** Our giving should be on a regular basis, that is, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, etc. Although there is nothing wrong with spontaneous giving, Scripture instructs us to be somewhat mindful and systematic about our giving. Therefore, giving should not be an afterthought or derived from “leftovers”. It should be a result of the firstfruits of our labor and intentionally planned as part of our budget (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- 2) **Am I giving proportionally?** Our giving should be in accordance with how each of us has been prospered by God; according to our ability (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:2–3). Many of us have been blessed by God abundantly, others have not. Some people can give much more than 10%, others much less. This is an issue that must be worked out in your own heart—but it must be worked out.
- 3) **Am I giving sacrificially and bountifully?** We are called to give generously, even sacrificially, but not to the point of personal affliction (2 Cor 8:2–3; Phil 4:17–18). Of course, this does not mean that our giving will not demand self-denial. Without question, we need to feel giving. Jesus’ gift of himself to the world included a life and death of suffering. Scripture teaches that we should strive to live like Jesus and that we will reap what we sow—either sparingly or bountifully.
- 4) **Am I giving intentionally?** Our giving should not be blind. We do give in faith to further the preaching and ministry of the gospel. We also give deliberately in order to meet a genuine need, not out of guilt merely to soothe a pressing request (2 Cor 8:4; Phil 4:16).
- 5) **Am I properly motivated in my giving?** Our giving should be rooted in an understanding of the gospel. That understanding, by God’s grace, leads to belief and our giving is a confession of and response to the truth of the Gospel. In essence, our motivation comes from a desire to give back to God because He has given so richly to us. Secondary motivations include a love for others (2 Cor. 8:9), a desire for reciprocity (1 Cor 9:14–15; 2 Cor 8:12–14; cf. Gal 6:6), and a reward from God (2 Cor 9:6).

\*To be read after listening to the sermon “Redeeming Money” given on 6/15/08

## REDEEMING MONEY\*

- 6) **Am I giving cheerfully?** God intends for our giving to spring from a cheerful heart which He loves. Again, God is not interested in your money but your heart. Our sacrifices do not mean as much to him as our repentance and our dependence on Him. We are to do all things, including giving, without grumbling and with joy (Philip 2:14; 2 Cor 9:7).
- 7) **Am I giving voluntarily?** Our giving must not be reluctant or under compulsion. Giving ought to be done out of one's free volition (2 Cor 8:2-3, 8; 9:7; Phil 4:18).

### **Should we tithe off our gross or net income?**

Every Christian must pray and seek God's wisdom as to how much they should give (James 1:5). While many people believe that the Old Testament tithe is good principle, they often fail to seek God's face as to how much they should give, more or less, because it's easy to follow a rule. Questions about gross or net income can evidence thoughtfulness, but it can also cause us to fall into a legalism quite easily. The Bible does not specifically say whether we should give 10% off our gross or net income. The Old Testament teaches the principle of firstfruits (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 2:12-14; 2 Chronicles 31:5). Old Testament believers gave from the best of their crops, not the leftovers. The same principle should apply to our giving today.

### **Should all of my tithe go to the local church?**

There is no clear biblical mandate governing how much of our tithe should go to the local church and how much should go to other ministries. After someone is converted to Jesus, we believe they must be converted to mission. While there are many different mission fields in the world worthy of supporting, God has called us individually and corporately to specific locations. The local church is simply an expression of the universal church that all true Christians are a part of. Every believer should be participating on mission in the manifestation of His Church locally. We do this by offering our time, resources, service, and money to the local church. While there is no verse stating, "You must give your tithe to this church," we do hope God leads you to join our mission here. As for your leaders and pastors, we have all given much of our lives to the church. This does not preclude us from supporting other ministries, but the substance of our giving is at our local church. We would encourage all members of Damascus Road to give to our mission first but lavish everywhere else too as God blesses you.

### **What does the money go toward at Damascus Road?**

Essentially, the giving at Damascus Road Church goes toward furthering our mission to proclaim the gospel in North Snohomish County and to teach people to live like Jesus. The more support that we have, the more people we are able to proclaim that gospel to. Currently, our giving supports the functional aspects of a "portable church" (e.g. rent, insurance, part-time salaries) as we move towards finding a more permanent location to serve our mission. We maintain a benevolence fund for those in need in addition to supporting other church plants and church-planting ministries locally and abroad. We have an open book policy with our membership. For more specifics, please email [giving@damascusradchurch.org](mailto:giving@damascusradchurch.org) and one of our elders will respond to your questions.

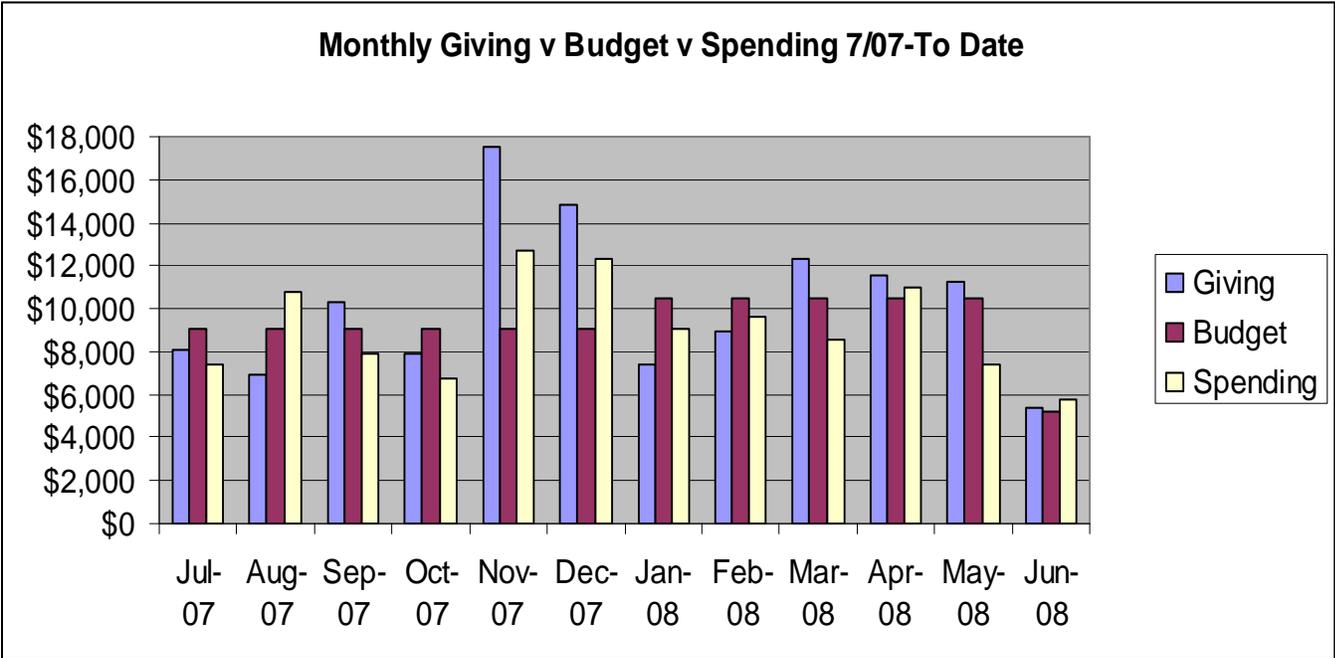
### **How can I give at Damascus Road Church?**

The paying of the tithes was not simply a regulation, but an important part of the Jewish religious worship. We believe that the giving of our tithes and offerings should be part of our worship to God. We do not "pass the plate" because it feels too passive and too consumeristic. Instead, we have several offering containers where you can give on Sunday morning before service, after service, or during Communion as part of your worship experience. Online giving is available but much less personal.

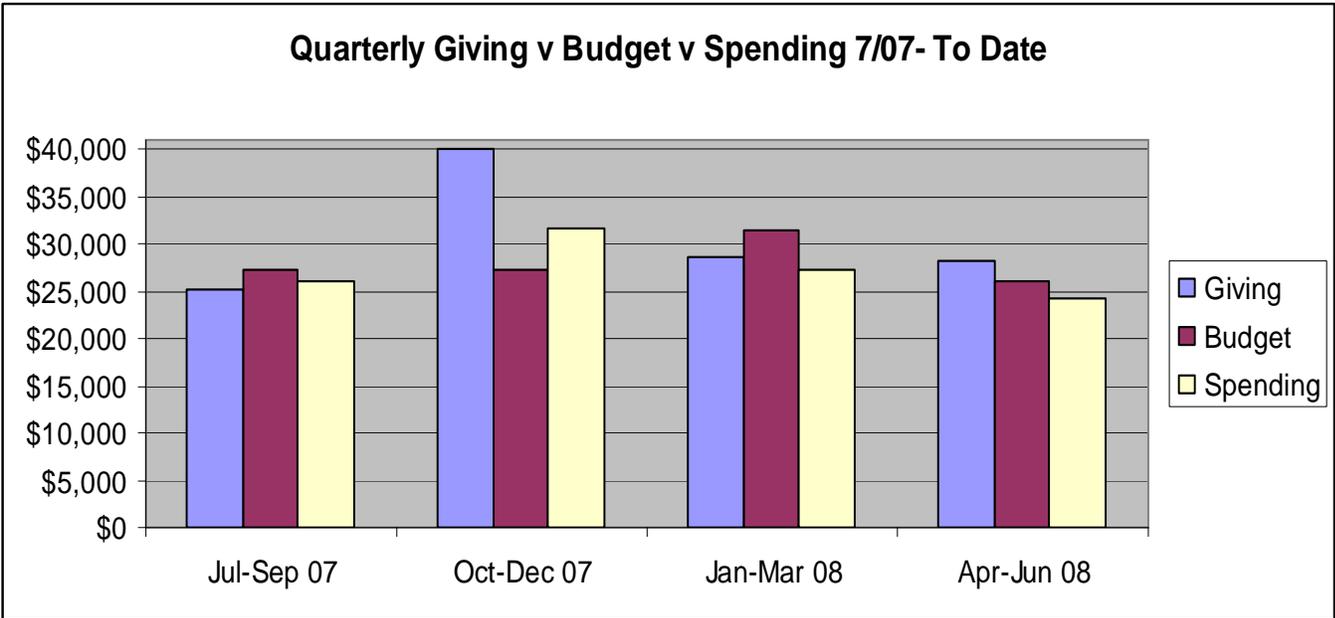
\*To be read after listening to the sermon "Redeeming Money" given on 6/15/08

**REDEEMING MONEY\***

**Damascus Road Financial Report**



2008 Total # of Giving Units (Families/Individuals) – 57  
 Average Per Giving Unit YTD- \$1004.57  
 Average Per Giving Unit Monthly- \$182.65



Current Cash Reserves- \$20,722.79

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# REDEEMING MONEY\*

## Damascus Road Church Income/Expense

January 1 - June 14, 2008

### Income

4010 Indiv/business contribution	57,260.52
<b>Total 4 Contributed support</b>	<b>\$ 57,260.52</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 57,260.52</b>

### Expenses

<b>7000 Grant &amp; contract expense</b>	
7020 Grants to other organizations	1,526.91
<b>Total 7000 Grant &amp; contract expense</b>	<b>\$ 1,526.91</b>
<b>7200 Salaries &amp; related expenses</b>	
7220 Salaries & wages - other	24,734.39
7250 Payroll taxes	1,406.27
<b>Total 7200 Salaries &amp; related expenses</b>	<b>\$ 26,140.66</b>
<b>7500 Other personnel expenses</b>	
7520 Accounting fees	623.75
7530 Legal fees	50.00
7540 Professional fees - other	120.00
7550 Temporary help - contract	80.00
<b>Total 7500 Other personnel expenses</b>	<b>\$ 873.75</b>
<b>8100 Non-personnel expenses</b>	
8110 Supplies	3,119.14
8130 Telephone & telecommunications	1,416.49
8150 Mailing services	41.00
8170 Printing & copying	952.74
8180 Books, subscriptions, reference	1,047.65
8190 In-house publications	125.00
<b>Total 8100 Non-personnel expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,702.02</b>
<b>8200 Occupancy expenses</b>	
8210 Rent, parking, other occupancy	8,530.00
<b>Total 8200 Occupancy expenses</b>	<b>\$ 8,530.00</b>
<b>8300 Travel &amp; meetings expenses</b>	
8310 Travel	445.60
8310 Travel	412.94
8320 Conference, convention, meeting	359.67
<b>Total 8300 Travel &amp; meetings expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,218.21</b>
<b>8500 Misc expenses</b>	
8540 Staff development	57.21
8540 Staff development	426.22
8560 Outside computer services	120.00
8570 Advertising expenses	71.46
8590 Other expenses	-1,285.26
<b>Total 8500 Misc expenses</b>	<b>-\$ 610.37</b>
<b>8600 Business expenses</b>	
8650 Taxes - other	280.00
<b>Total 8600 Business expenses</b>	<b>\$ 33.75</b>
Supplies & Materials	280.00
Uncategorized Expense	1,601.40

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## REDEEMING MONEY\*

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 46,296.33</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ 10,964.19</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>	
<b>9800 Fixed asset purchases</b>	
<b>9830 Capital purchases - equipment</b>	1,850.38
<b>9840 Capital purchases – vehicles/trailer</b>	1,881.34
<b>Total 9800 Fixed asset purchases</b>	<b>\$ 3,731.72</b>
<b>9930 Program admin allocations</b>	1,537.63
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,269.35</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>-\$ 5,269.35</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 5,694.84</b>

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