

On Giving to the Church

By James Kautz

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Writing on the topic of giving to the Church is difficult for me. I give, and have for most of my adult life, but Jesus commanded us to give in secret, so I rarely talk about this openly. But we parishioners have just been challenged by the admin board to increase our giving and that's a hard message to hear (and to deliver!), so perhaps my experiences may be helpful to some if I share them in general terms.

The idea of giving to support your church and its ministries is as ancient as the Scriptures. When Israel reached the Promised Land, eleven of the twelve tribes were given territories to claim as their own on which to build homes, farms, and businesses. But the twelfth tribe of the Levites was not given any land. They were not to be economic producers, but rather would be workers for the Lord, building up the faith of the people by facilitating their Temple sacrifices and worship. Their support was to come from the other eleven tribes (Deut. 18:1-8).

That was the attitude my parents had in their giving to support their church, and they gave generously. They were far from wealthy, but dad would always give us coins to put in the offering basket on Sunday, in addition to the folded up cheque he placed in it.

After I finished high school, I enrolled in the Bible college they had attended. When I was home for spring break, I was surprised to see the college's president show up at my door one day. But I wasn't in trouble. He was looking to talk to my parents, not to me. He said he was on a cross-country fundraising tour, visiting the college's top 100



donors to ask them to increase their giving. I was surprised that my parents, who endured many years of financial struggle, were in the top 100 donors for the college, which had been around for fifty years and had seen thousands of students go through its programs. That left a deep impression on me.

One of the many things that attracted me to the woman who would become my wife was that she had the same attitude towards giving to the Church. As we built our family, we made a commitment to give a set portion of our income to several charities dear to us, with our parish always getting the largest portion of that amount. We have made it the top priority of our family's spending, and we pay for groceries, mortgage, utilities, vehicles, savings, and recreation with what's left over. God has absolutely kept the promise in Malachi 3:10-12, that if we fully support our place of worship, he will open the floodgates of heaven and bless us in return. We've seen this in so many ways in our family that I can't begin to count or name them.

So I challenge all who read this, especially young people and young families, to think about how you prioritize your financial support of our parish. If you have regular income but don't give regularly, start now. No excuses. Find a way to make it happen, even if it's just a little bit. Make that gift your priority, and then cover the rest of life's expenses with what's left. You will be surprised at how God responds to your generosity, I promise you.