

Tithing: Do I need to tithe?

Being a Christian some make sure that they give a part of their income towards tithe and there are others who do not believe in the system but give as and when they feel or are led to give.

So who is right and who is wrong?

Is tithe necessary?

Is tithing part of the Old Testament only? Is there any mention of it in the New Testament?

Many people feel happy when they tithe; they feel as if they have done something good which will go in their records and they will get rewarded for it, or by tithing they will expect to receive abundantly. Is it right?

What is the truth about tithe let me lead you to it.

- **Why do we need to tithe?**

The Hebrew word '**tithe**' means 'ten percent' or 'tenth portion'. It the portion of the all that the Lord has given us which is His; and which we need to return back to Him.

The Lord asks us to tithe so as to teach us righteousness. Some may say it is part of the old law, the law of Moses which we do not fall under it.

Jesus did not change any law for He too kept it.

Matthew 5:17-18

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The covenant of Jesus only added grace and truth to not only the covenant of Moses but also of Noah and Abraham and others (the others did not have much conditions and penalties), so that we can under grace follow it in spirit and truth; not just in words with a sword hanging over us.

John 1:17

17 For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The old Law was given in the shadow (Old Testament is a shadow of the Word) therefore needs to be understood. The Law of Moses was followed in the flesh but Jesus via the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of Truth led (leads) us to follow in a new dimension. When the Holy Spirit is in us the Law gets inside us, we break free from the words and follow in spirit and truth; in the light and not in the shadow.

Tithe is not a law but a statute of the Lord. If we do not tithe we do not become a sinner, but we do not become righteous either and we land up blocking our own blessings. The blessings of Abraham are for the children of Abraham, those who are righteous or pursue righteousness like him. The abundant blessings we receive when we tithe is not directly because we tithe. When we do not tithe we block the abundant blessings which are already given to the children of Abraham (which we become by faith in Jesus Christ), but when we tithe we do not stop the flow.

The first record of tithing in the Bible is of Abraham.

Genesis 14:20

- 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High.
- 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;
- 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

In the Old Testament Melchizedek (in Hebrew means 'King of righteousness') was the shadow of Jesus, and when Abraham gave him his tithes, he gave it to the Church (the body of Christ which was yet not formed).

Hebrews 7:1-4

- 1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;
- 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;
- 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.
- 4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Lord wants to teach us righteous therefore asks us to tithe. So we should not be happy if we tithe, we are not doing any great thing; it is just our duty which we are fulfilling.

- **How much should I tithe?**

If you are not led by the Spirit of God by default you need to give the minimum ten percent otherwise what the Lord leads you to.

In the first Church in Christ as recorded in the book of **Acts 4:36-37, 5:1-11** is actually connected with tithe. Each person was instructed by the Lord to give (as per personally specified) towards

the community (social and spiritual which the Apostles handled). Since they were instructed it no longer became a statute but became a law. It was this reason the punishment of breaking it was so harsh.

Acts 4:36-37, 5:1-11

- 36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,
37 having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.
1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.
2 And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.
3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?
4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."
5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.
6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him*.
7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."
9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out."
10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband.
11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

People who are not born-again and are having no personal communication with the Holy Spirit should follow the default ten percent else should follow as what the Lord leads one to give.

- **If I do not tithe, what will be the consequences?**

Because we do not follow the righteous of God by not tithing we land up blocking our blessings. We all lack because we like robbers do not give the Lord what belongs to Him.

Malachi 3:8-9

- 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.
9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

But when we tithe we are blessed in all areas of our life. Our blessings overflow us so much that other will notice and give glory to God.

Malachi 3:10-12

- 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*
- 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.
- 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

There is another thing which I have seen people do and which is not right blessing their tithes – never bless your tithes for it is not yours but the Lord's. Also do not give tithe as a Bata for your blessings for example to solve your financial problems; you are not buying anything here. It is another thing that the Lord allows the blessings to flow on to you when you righteously keep his Word.

The scripture **Luke 6:37** which Jesus spoke is not connected with tithe but is used by many for tithing to buy discounted blessings (the scripture is to do with our dealing with others not with God, while tithing is to do with the Lord, even though we give it to others).

Luke 6:37

- 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

This scripture connects to its previous scripture.

Luke 6:36

- 37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

- **Who do I tithe to?**

Tithing is not limited only to giving the Church. In the Bible the Lord clearly specifies where and how much we should tithe. Our tithe should be given both to the Church and as charity to the poor, widows, orphans, etc...

In the book of **Ezekiel chapter 45** the Lord instructs through the prophet detailed instructions on tithing.

Ezekiel 45:1-15

- 1 Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length *shall be* the length of five and twenty thousand *reeds*, and the breadth *shall be* ten thousand. This *shall be* holy in all the borders thereof round about.
- 2 Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred *in length*, with five hundred *in breadth*, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof.
- 3 And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary *and* the most holy *place*.
- 4 The holy *portion* of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.
- 5 And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.
- 6 And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy *portion*: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.
- 7 And a *portion shall be* for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy *portion*, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy *portion*, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length *shall be* over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border.
- 8 In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and *the rest of* the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.
- 9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.
- 10 Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.
- 11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer.
- 12 And the shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.
- 13 _ This *is* the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley:
- 14 Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, *ye shall offer* the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, *which is* an homer of ten baths; for ten baths *are* an homer:
- 15 And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.

About 55% should go to the Church and balance 45% of our tithe should go towards social charity (widows, orphans, poor etc.)

Deuteronomy 15:11

11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Deuteronomy 26:13

13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*:

That does not mean by putting that 55% in the Church bag our job is done.

In the Church portion we have to give towards evangelization of the Word, publishing of the Word, study of the Word etc. A small part this portion is also to be given to bless the leader of our community and other believers. It need not be that they ought to be poor, they may be rich or self sufficient but if you find you can bless that person in any way by buying or giving them something which they need we should go ahead and do it.

Breakup of the Church tithe 55% - Ezekiel 45:1-11

25% to people who evangelize of the Word of God **Ezekiel 45:1-4**

Of this 25%:

0.5% to publishing of the Bible **Ezekiel 45:2a**

0.05% to publishing of Bible study books **Ezekiel 45:2b**

25% to the Church community **Ezekiel 45:5**

5% to community leaders and believers – for their personal needs **Ezekiel 45:6-8**

Balance towards social charity (approximately 45%).

Leviticus 19:9-10

9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

These are guidelines of a perfect tithe. That does not mean we need to calculate every month every rupee or dollar and give in the respective areas. Like I said before tithing is not a law, so like we do for our taxes annually we should also try and pursue to balance the different areas of tithing by the end of the year.

- **So by giving ten percent of my money, am I through?**

Tithe is not limited to possessions like money, or material things. One needs to tithe also in other areas including time and prayer / worship. If you are not getting time for yourself it will be most probably because you do not tithe your time to the Lord, doing his work.

A guideline of how much time to tithe is also mentioned in the same chapter of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 45:12

12 And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen (five) shekels, shall be your maneh.

We have options of 4 hours a day (20 hours is ours the balance is the Lords), 5 to 6 days a month (25 days in month is ours the balance is the Lords) or 2 days in a week (5 days is ours the balance is the Lords); the choice is ours to make.

Giving the Lord our time is like giving money which will bear interest for us and only come back to us in form of blessings.

This time should be dedicated to the Lord doing his work and spending time with Him. This could be in praying, studying the bible, sharing the Word with others, building others in the Lord socially and spiritually etc...

In our time dedicated to the Lord we are to spend minimum 15mins a day or a sixth portion of our Lord's time for the study (**Ezekiel 45:13** wheat) on the Word and a minimum 15mins a day or sixth portion of the Lord's time for reflecting / meditating on the scriptures (barley - appearance resembles wheat berries). Just reading or studying the scriptures will not give us deep understanding, it is when we spend time meditating that we allow the Lord to reveal the understanding to us. I realized after reading this scripture that the Lord was able to reveal me great understanding of scripture because I would spend most of my in between free time meditation on the scripture I am studying for that day.

Ezekiel 45:13

13 This is the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley:

Prayer is communication with God, this we should be doing ceaselessly throughout the day, even in between and while doing our daily activities. What is meant as prayer time is when we stop every activity and spend time communicating with the Lord. Of this time we should spend at least 5mins a day (or a tenth part of the Lord's time) praying in tongues.

Ezekiel 45:14

¹⁴ Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, *ye shall offer* the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, *which is* an homer of ten baths; for ten baths *are* an homer:

We should also spend a very small time (0.5% - one in two hundred) in praising the Lord. This, the Lord asks us to do, not because He desires our praises. But by our praising Him, it will benefit our community.

Ezekiel 45:15

¹⁵ And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD.

One needs to understand God does not normally prefer prayers of people to be very long or just filled request forms for things and favors or prayers to only butter Him up. Our prayer should be productive; someone whom we can consider as an example with regards to prayer life in the Bible other than Jesus is Daniel. Both spend regular small amounts of time in prayer and once a while long durations. Ideally our prayer time should include other than petitions; worship, praise, thanks giving, praying in tongues and time to listen to the Lord.

I would like to once again point out that these guidelines for tithing are defaults. This means when the Lord has not given us any specific instructions, then we follow these guidelines. But when the Lord put in your heart any specific instruction towards tithing you need to follow it, since it now does not become a statute but a commandment and a law.

Now let us not loose our blessing by being unjust to God. Let us give to Him what rightly belongs to Him and He will keep His hand always over you.

God Bless