
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: ***Does the Bible require tithing?***

Beginning with the Nation of Israel until the Lord's church in the NT, God has ordained that His people collect and store up money to use in accomplishing His work.

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

Let us begin by saying just a word about the Nation of Israel.

Israel was a theocracy. It was a combination of **church** and **state**. There was a very elaborate temple to build and maintain, and there were thousands of governmental and religious leaders that required financial support so they could give their undivided attention to the work of God.

In order to generate the revenue necessary to support these men God instituted "tithes." A "tithes" simply meant 10% of a man's income.

Here are two critical points which most churches have ignore concerning "tithing."

- 1) **Israel had THREE separate tithes which they contributed to the Lord's work each year.**
- 2) **These three tithes were REQUIRED, they were not voluntary!**

The three tithes required included:

- a) **The Lord's tithe** (Num 18:21).
- b) **The Festival tithe** (Dt 12:11-12).
- c) **The Welfare tithe** (Dt 14:28-29). This particular tithe was taken up ever third year while the others were collected yearly.

Spread out over a three year period, then, these Israelites were giving 23.3% of their income to the Lord's work. These tithes were equivalent to our income taxes. These tithes were NOT voluntary and they were used to run the nation.

In addition to this "income tax" which was required of them, the Israelites were also asked to give voluntarily to the Lord's work. This voluntary giving came in two forms:

- a) **First fruits offering** (Num 18:12-13).
- b) **The freewill offering** (Lev 22:18).

This voluntary giving was exactly that – VOLUNTARY!! A man gave voluntarily only when his heart would "stir him up." If it would **begrudge** him to give, he may as well keep his offering to himself.

Deuteronomy 16:17

¹⁷ "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

THE NT CHURCH

When we come to the NT we see a drastic shift in philosophy. The NT church did not have a tithe!

Remember, the tithe was equivalent to our modern day income taxes. They served to run the nation of Israel.

But the Lord's church is not a single nation of people. The Lord's church is international. The members of the Lord's church do not pay tithes (or taxes) to operate a theocratic government. Instead, the Lord's people pay taxes to their civil governments (Romans 13:6), and they give voluntarily to the Lord's work.

The NT is absolutely silent about the Lord's church having a tithe. There is NO tax in the Lord's church! The giving in the Lord's church is strictly voluntary!

2 Corinthians 9:7

⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:

² On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

APPLICATION

Now let us sum up and apply what we have studied from the Bible.

The only method of generating funds in the NT church is the voluntary contribution found in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

1) It is voluntary ... it is not a tithe ... it is not a tax!

Any church which **requires** 10% of its members is overstepping their bounds!

(If a man chooses voluntarily to give 10%, or even more that is fine! He may do as he wishes because NT giving is voluntary! But the church has no right to insist on 10%!)

The NT simply teaches that men should give “as they have prospered” and that it is not to be done out of necessity for “God loves a cheerful giver!”

2) This voluntary contribution is to take place on the first day of the week!

In other words, there is absolutely no Biblical authority for taking up a collection during the week.

Some churches take up a collection on Wednesday nights during what they call “*prayer meeting night*.” Others take up a collection every night of a revival! My friend, there is absolutely no authority for doing this! God specified He wanted a single collection on the first day of the week. Neither did He intend for churches to have two collections on the first day of the week!

3) This voluntary collection on the first day of the week is the ONLY method of generating funds the church may engage in.

The Lord never intended for the church to raise money by having:

- Bingo

- Car washes
- Raffle ticket sales
- Candy sales
- Bake sales
- Paper drives
- Selling records and cassettes
- Selling books
- Investments in stocks and bonds
- Investments in business and real estate

To look at some churches today you would think their primary goal is to simply make money. That's not why Jesus built the church! The Lord's church is not in the money making business, it's suppose to be in the soul saving business!

4) **This money was to be used for the Lord's people and for the Lord's work.**

Notice carefully that 1 Cor 16:1 says the collection is "*for the saints.*" It was not intended to be used for people who refuse to obey the Lord.

This money was to be used in the Lord's work. The Lord's work is to "seek and save the lost." The Lord's work is not to entertain men! So why do we see churches:

- Building gymnasiums?
- Building "family life centers"?
- Paying for skating parties?
- Paying for so-called "church dinners"?

Neither is the Lord's work to teach secular education. Why then are churches building and operating:

- Day care centers
- Elementary schools
- Middle schools
- High schools and colleges

Where is the Scripture for any of these things? Where is the Scripture for the church to build and operate hospitals, nursing homes and orphan homes?

My friend, the churches of today have forgotten what the church of the Lord was established for. The church was designed to be a spiritual institution to save the souls of men. The Bible tells us what Jesus thinks of these things:

John 2:16

¹⁶ And [Jesus] said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

SUMMARY

It is past time for churches to get out of the money making business and get back into the soul saving business. It is past time for churches to stop ignoring the Lord's pattern for His church!

Matthew 15:9

⁹ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

My friend, don't worship God in vain.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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