

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Fall Stewardship Campaign 2020

"The wisdom of the prudent is to discern their way..." -Proverbs 14:8

Week 3: How Should I Give to the Lord's Work

This fall at St. Paul's we are undertaking a Stewardship Campaign. Proverbs 14:8 declares, *"The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way..."* Ultimately, that's what we're going to be about! We are intentionally discerning our way of stewardship in light of God's Word.

This said, two weeks ago we discovered that stewardship is ***the faithful management of all we have***. Last week we learned that being a faithful steward of our financial resources entails using our money for God's ultimate purpose: "making disciples of all nations." This week, we're going to get down to the nitty gritty by asking the question, ***"how should I give to the Lord's work?"***

Here's some scriptures to help us out:

1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money ***in keeping with his income...***

Deuteronomy 16:17 Each of you must bring a gift ***in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.***

In these two passages we learn that we should give to the Lord ***proportionately***. To say it another way, *we should give a percentage of the income the Lord enables us to earn through our work and investments.*

From this, the question becomes, what proportion of my income is God calling me to give? Once again, here's some Scriptures to help us out:

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 ⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and ***whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*** ⁷ Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--***see that you also excel in this grace of giving.***

Mark 12:43-44 I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, ***out of her poverty, put in everything--*** all she had to live on."

The theme that ties these passages together is generosity. Applying this to our weekly giving, you can say this: *we should give a generous percentage of the income the Lord enables us to earn through our work and investments.* In the Old Testament, this generosity was set at a tithe (10% of your income). Though no longer a *requirement* for Christians, the tithe is a useful tool for us to examine the generosity of our own giving. Ask yourself, "Does my giving even begin to measure up to what God commanded his people of old? If not, why not? What would have to change for that to be the case?"

To help in your reflection, there is a chart on the flipside of this handout that lays out giving percentages based on income. As we near Stewardship Sunday, let me encourage you to think about what it might look like to grow either *one percent* in your giving or to even try tithing (10%).