

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2007 Building Appeal — Continuing the Journey
ON GRATEFUL GIVING

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind . . .”
II Corinthians 9:7

The Bible is very clear and specific on the matter of Christian giving: GIVE as you have made up your mind. In other words: you consider your gift. You decide. You determine your contribution.

Of course, behind this is a nagging question asked by any serious disciple: HOW? HOW do I decide what is appropriate in my giving? HOW do I make up my mind about Christian stewardship? Are there any guidelines to assist me in making my decision?

Yes. The Bible is never shy about discussing money. It is frank and it is direct. What follow are three Biblical principles to assist the giver in making up his/her mind.

Principle One: *Trust God.*

All stewardship is about a faithful response to the one who has loved us into being. All giving is intended to grow out of the relationship that we share with our maker and creator. We give because we have been created to give. It is our design. We give because it is our human need to give.

Principle Two: *Give proportionally.*

The Bible encourages us to give not some random dollar figure, but rather to give in proportion to what we have received. The questions that must be resisted include:
How much does the budget require of me?
What is my fair share of contributing to the budget?
What does the average person give?

But rather, the question that must be asked by the Christian giver is this:

Of all the blessings that God has so graciously given to me, what shall I return in gratitude to further the kingdom?

Principle Three: *Grow toward and beyond tithing.*

In the Old Testament, tithing was the law. God’s people were required to tithe. In the New Testament, tithing is still a clear standard, but it is no longer required. What is consistent between the two testaments, *interestingly*, is that in both tithing is not the end goal but it is the starting point. Offerings were the gifts offered *after the tithing was in place*. You see, tithing is *a part of* the spiritual goal toward which we are called to grow.

God wants us to grow deeper and stronger in our faith. God wants us to grow in trust. God wants us to learn to give. God wants us to risk growth in grace through our giving.

If you are currently giving at 5 percent of your income, can you increase to 7 percent? Or from 2 to 3 percent? Growth is the hope in the heart of God for you and for me.

Lord, we thank you for the many blessings and gifts you have given us, and for the opportunity to give back a portion of what you have first given us – our selves, our time and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Amen.