

Thoughts on Tithing.

I am a typical United Church person in that I have always been put off by appeals for money - I have never wanted anyone's reason for staying away from church to be because they felt pressured to put more in the collection plate. So reading this last chapter of "Five Practises.." has been challenging for me because you cannot read it without noticing that, within this book, "extravagant generosity" is definitely interpreted with an emphasis on giving regular and generous monetary tithes and then some to your church.

My defensive response to this is often, What about the people who simply cannot "give generously" in this way? Also, when we speak of gifts to your church should not generous gifts of time, talent, involvement and leadership also be considered part of one's tithe?

I ask these questions as someone who does indeed commit 10% of my take home income to my church , part locally and part to M & S. I do it because I can and I do it in part for my own benefit. It ensures that I get a healthy tax refund every year and because I tithe it is easier, without guilt, to refuse the myriad of requests that come to me to support other good causes. I have intentionally planned where my charitable givings are going based on my convictions and my love for my church. Beyond that, I trust in the Spirit to move other hearts to support the many good causes that I cannot.

And I am not alone in my tithing. I encourage all you committed people out there to do the math. If you add to the amount you put in the collection plate, the money that you spend on baking, making crafts or buying groceries and other supplies for church fund raisers, and then add to that the cost to attend the events and pay to take some of the baking ,crafts or auction items back home again then - I'll bet that you discover that you tithe to your church too.

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