

history of tithing in the new testament church

The History of Tithing in the New Testament Church: A Deeper Dive

Have you ever wondered about the origins of tithing, and whether the practice holds the same weight in the New Testament as it does in some interpretations of the Old Testament? Many Christians grapple with this question, finding themselves navigating differing viewpoints and interpretations. This comprehensive guide delves into the historical context of tithing, examining relevant passages in the New Testament to provide a nuanced understanding of its role in the early church. We'll explore the transition from the Old Covenant to the New, analyzing whether tithing remains a mandatory practice for believers today, and offering clarity to a topic often shrouded in debate. Prepare for a journey through scripture and history that sheds light on this enduring question.

The Old Testament Foundation: Setting the Stage

Before diving into the New Testament, understanding the Old Testament's influence on tithing is crucial. The Old Testament frequently mentions tithing, primarily as a system of supporting the Levites (the priestly tribe) and contributing to temple maintenance and sacrificial offerings. Leviticus 27:30 provides a clear directive: "...every tenth part of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord." This established a clear 10% contribution as a religious obligation. This system wasn't merely about financial support; it reflected a covenant relationship between God and His people, emphasizing gratitude and acknowledging God's ownership of all things. Understanding this historical context is vital for interpreting the New Testament's approach.

The Transition to the New Covenant: A Shift in Emphasis

With the arrival of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant, many aspects of Jewish law and practice underwent a transformation. The question arises: what happened to tithing? Unlike the Old Testament's detailed regulations, the New Testament doesn't contain a direct command to tithe 10%. This absence is significant and often cited by those who argue against the obligatory nature of tithing in the New Testament church.

Examining Key New Testament Passages: Generosity, Not Legalism

While no explicit command to tithe exists, the New Testament emphasizes generosity and giving. Passages like 2 Corinthians 9:7 encourage cheerful giving, highlighting the importance of giving out of

a heart motivated by love and gratitude, rather than obligation: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." This focus on the spirit of giving, rather than the specific percentage, is a crucial distinction. The emphasis shifts from a legalistic adherence to a specific tithe to a freely given offering based on one's relationship with God and their capacity to give.

The Early Church and its Approach to Finances: Shared Resources and Collective Giving

Acts 2:44-45 provides a glimpse into the financial practices of the early church: "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling property and possessions, they shared with anyone in need." This passage depicts a community characterized by radical sharing and collective support, where resources were pooled to meet the needs of all members. While this doesn't explicitly mention tithing, it showcases a high level of generosity and communal responsibility regarding finances. The focus was on meeting communal needs and supporting those in need, rather than adhering to a strict tithing system.

The Principle of Giving in the New Testament: A Matter of the Heart

Instead of a mandated percentage, the New Testament emphasizes the principle of giving. Jesus himself frequently spoke about stewardship and wealth (Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 16:1-13), emphasizing the responsibility that comes with possessing resources. These teachings call believers to be responsible stewards of God's blessings, using their resources to further His kingdom and help those in need. This principle transcends the specific amount given; it's about a heart posture of generosity and selfless giving.

Misinterpretations and Common Concerns

One frequent misunderstanding is conflating the Old Testament tithe with New Testament giving. The Old Testament system was tied to a specific priestly class and temple maintenance; the New Testament focuses on the broader purpose of supporting the church, mission work, and aiding those in need. Another concern revolves around the pressure associated with tithing. The emphasis in the New Testament is on joyful and voluntary giving, not on coerced contributions. A healthy church fosters a culture of generosity that stems from genuine faith, not obligation.

Conclusion: Generosity as a Hallmark of Christian Faith

In conclusion, while the Old Testament established a system of tithing, the New Testament doesn't explicitly mandate it. Instead, it emphasizes the principle of cheerful giving, guided by a heart of gratitude and love for God and neighbor. The early church exemplified this principle through communal sharing and meeting the needs of its members. The focus is not on a specific percentage but on a faithful and generous response to God's blessings, reflecting a spirit of stewardship and selfless service. The key takeaway is not about the percentage, but about the posture of the heart.

FAQs

1. Did Jesus ever mention tithing? While Jesus didn't directly abolish tithing, his teachings on generosity and stewardship suggest a shift in emphasis from legalistic adherence to a voluntary and heartfelt approach to giving.
1. What about the passages in the New Testament that discuss giving? Passages like 2 Corinthians 9:7 highlight the importance of cheerful giving, emphasizing the spirit behind the gift rather than the amount.
1. Is tithing a requirement for salvation? No, tithing is not a requirement for salvation. Salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ. Giving is an expression of gratitude and faith, not a condition for salvation.
1. How much should I give? The amount to give is a personal decision based on your relationship with God and your capacity to give. The focus should be on cheerful and generous giving, not on a specific percentage.
1. What are the different viewpoints on tithing in the modern church? There are diverse viewpoints, ranging from those who believe tithing is a mandatory biblical practice to those who see it as a helpful guideline or simply a suggestion. The important aspect is to approach giving with a sincere and generous heart.

Additional Resources

history of tithing in the new testament church

[History Of Tithing In The New Testament Church](#)

History Of Tithing In The New Testament Church

Related Articles

- [gamer girl by mari mancusi](#)
- [history of artificial sweeteners](#)
- [gestion de proyectos en excel](#)

[Back to Home](#)