

### ***Pledging to Give in Stewardship***

We continue to consider **pledging** (promising) **to give** (to transfer in love for free) **in stewardship** (as those who manage value in trust for the true owner).

#### *Article 11*

### **Prayer, Fasting, and Giving**

“Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving,” the triad of spiritual disciplines has been our tradition since the beginning. We are taught that we should not fast without also praying, lest it become a weight-loss exercise and not a sacrificial act that will allow us to draw closer to God. We fast, sacrificing food, so that our prayers come from a hunger for God, and His wisdom.

Many of us were taught to put “alms” in the coin boxes, especially during Lent. Our dime or quarter was a sacrifice years ago, like the widow who put in all she had (Luke 21:1-4). When we talk about giving today, as adults, are we still talking sacrifice?

**Giving.** Giving is as much a spiritual discipline as prayer and fasting. In our society, those who have money have choices. They can give money to gain power, both in and outside of church circles. They can choose to give with great publicity, so they command respect. Or, they can give with prayer and fasting. In this manner, they offer a sacrifice of money, humbly and with discernment. Thus, they honor the Lord who has made them a steward over all He has provided. Giving is to be the fruit of our spiritual efforts, yet we dare not give without prayer and fasting.

**Tithing is Our Tradition.** Our understanding of giving comes from the first few pages of the Bible. Abraham, in thanksgiving for his victory in battle, offers a tithe to the priest, Melchizedek (Genesis 14:14-20). Giving is **tithing** and **offering**—accompanied by prayer, and fasting. Tithing is sacrificial giving, and requires trust, since we are to give a tithe *first*, from our paycheck. We should never think of that 10% as available for us to spend. It is the Lord’s take--money *returned to the Lord* for the purposes of His kingdom--offered with prayer and fasting.

If you have ever drawn closer to the Lord in prayer, or in fasting, you will draw even closer when you tithe. The three walk hand-in-hand.

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