

### ***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 4*

### **Expectations of Our Parish**

Last time, we focused upon God's expectations for us. This time, our focus is on the **expectations of our parish**, within Christ's Church. We have a parish by-law, Article IX, (October, 2003), which gives us very clear guidance, with familiar biblical citations in Section 2.

#### **ARTICLE IX - REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTING MEMBERS**

##### **Section 1. Basic Criteria of "good standing," or "voting membership."**

To be a "member in good standing" under the By-laws Art. VIII and/or a "voting member" under the Constitution, Art. III, Sec. 1, Par. A., a person must be 18 years of age and over, must be living in accord with Holy Orthodox Tradition and must be:

1. Baptized, Chrismated and Communicated as Orthodox;
2. Living in Peace and Repentance with regular Confession;
3. Regularly participating in Liturgy, especially on Sundays;
4. Obeying Hierarchy of God, Orthodox Bishop and Priest;
5. Participating cooperatively in Orthodox parish governance;
6. Learning more of Orthodoxy to cooperate in deification;
7. Using God's gifts for service in parochial ministries; and,
8. Personally living disciplines of giving, prayer and fasting.

Orthodox giving is one part of the larger reality of Stewardship. The minimum financial giving acceptable to be a "member in good standing" for any one year is the Orthodox (biblical and patristic) standard of "tithes and offerings." Pledging annually to give "tithes and offerings" or pledging to move with God's help toward that biblical and patristic standard will suffice assuming any applicable jurisdictional canons are satisfied.

##### **Section 2. "Tithes," "Offerings" & "Moving toward Tithing" Defined**

- A. "A tithe" means 10% of an individual's personal income given back to God--usually, but not necessarily only--through the Parish General Operating Fund (our modern "storehouse" see Malachi 3:6-12; Matthew 23:23).
- B. "An offering" means a gift given to God beyond the tithe, never in place of the tithe nor reducing the tithe in any way (see Luke 21:1-4).
- C. "Moving toward tithing" involves a personal commitment to a definite plan to achieve tithing over time with God's help. (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

Above, we see that the discipline of giving is an expectation (item #8) for parish members. Members "pledge to give 'tithes and offerings' or to move with God's help toward that ... standard..."

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