



# GENEROUSLIVING

ALL OF ME IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM

SUMMIT 2016

## FAQ TITHE

- 1. Since the church manual states that tithing isn't a test of fellowship, is it really that big of a deal?**

Tithing is not paying dues of members. It is a matter of the heart. It is a relational matter. The Church manual is a guide book for operation of the church and is not equal to the Bible.

- 2. What if I don't make enough to return tithe and pay all my bills?**

The Treasure Principle page 66 "If we pay our debt (returning tithe) to God first, then we will incur His blessings to help us pay our debts to men. But when we rob God to pay men we rob ourselves of God's blessing."

- 3. Is it ok if I give my tithe to 3ABN? I like to know where my money is going.**

We are not only focusing on the local church, we focus worldwide. If we give selectively, we will hurt the church. The tithe is God's way of providing resources for the needs of the church... "Bring the tithe to the storehouse", by this, the storehouse is established. The key is to find where the storehouse is located. The local conference has been designated as the storehouse for all our local churches. We must share with members how the storehouse manages the tithe.

- 4. When have I given enough?**

This question could imply that the person is not a joyful giver. But we have every reason to be joyful in our giving. In Testimonies, book 4, Ellen White says, "I speak of the tithing system, yet how meager it looks to my mind! How small the estimate! How vain the endeavor to measure with mathematical rules, time, money, and love against a love and sacrifice that is measureless and incomputable! Tithes for Christ! Oh, meager pittance, shameful recompense 120 for that which cost so much!" How can we not happily give when He has given so much! What if He asked, "When have I given enough?"

One way to look at giving is systematic benevolence...The Bible clearly states the percentage for tithe, so we don't have to guess or wonder about that. As for offering, make a prayerful commitment between you and the Lord, and abide by it, giving more if you feel impressed.

- 5. Do I need to return tithe every time I am paid, or can I save it all until the end of the year and return it all at once? I could invest it and have even more to give.**

There are risks in the investments we have available to us in this world. Investing in God is a sure thing! Stocks and bonds can lose value; investments in heaven are blessed and multiplied. In Deuteronomy 26, we have the example of the Israelites bringing their "firstfruits" to the priests and Levites. "...and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have

given me.” Deuteronomy 26:10. This implies that regularity, consistency, and timeliness are important when it comes to tithes and offerings. After all, God wants to be first in our hearts and minds!

**6. Does God indicate a specific amount we should give for offering?**

No, it is a freewill decision. Freedom of conscience- from one’s heart.

**7. What if someone in need asks me for money to help them with expenses? Can I give them my tithe money? God says, "If you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me." So isn't it the same as returning my tithe to God?**

The tithe belongs to God and must be used for His specific purposes. Choosing to help others with expenses is a matter of your conscience and God’s leading.

**8. If the total tithe of my church is high enough, shouldn't that earn us our own pastor, rather than sharing one with the other church?**

A pastor of a small church or a big church receives the same salary. Salary is paid from the storehouse- the local conference. Congregationalism is when a local church directly pays its pastor. Then the ministry of the pastor most likely will be restricted and influenced by the wants of the members because they control the purse strings (salary). We all share responsibilities to make sure that God’s field is covered. A portion of tithe is used to fund educational ministry, camp programs, etc. All churches and members benefit. This matter is not only a concern in the local church (congregationalism) but also the world church.

**9. The Conference receives my tithe each month; why can't the Conference help pay for my church's building project?**

The purpose of tithe is to fund salaries of pastors and others that spread the gospel, not for capital improvements. When the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt, offerings funded the construction, not tithe.

**10. I hear from others that my tithe is being wasted at the Conference and the Union; how can I direct what my tithe money is used for?**

Tithing is really not giving, it is returning to the Lord a percentage of what he gives us. Which means that it's God's money used by the Church to operate, not ours. The Seventh-day Adventist church takes the use of God's money very seriously. We employ the General Conference Auditing Services to audit and express their opinion on how we utilize tithe. Use of tithe is mandated by scripture, and we have had a clean audit for at least the past five years. God is blessing the Carolina Conference with increased tithes and offerings every year. He knows better than anyone where his money can be trusted to be used for His glory.

**11. The cost of Adventist college education is expensive; can't tithe be used to pay all the costs of Adventist education? When my children graduate, they would return even more tithe to the Conference.**

We do invest in the future of our children by allocating some tithe to Southern Adventist University, Oakwood University and Andrews University. Even with our tithe allocation, college education is expensive and continues to increase.

**12. Isn't tithing really more of an Old Testament standard and requirement? Why then would we follow this practice as a Christian Church if the ceremonial laws are no longer binding on us?**

Returning tithe has nothing to do with ceremonial laws. It is the foundation of how Jesus used tithe to advance the gospel by reaching lost souls.

**13. Didn't Jesus censure the Pharisees because they were being so particular about tithing?**

The new covenant is a covenant of the heart. Matthew 23. Hebrews discusses Abraham's tithe practice and reminds us that returning tithe remains the ultimate statement of our faith in and our love for God.

**14. Why can't the tithe or a large portion of it remain in the local church to help us with much needed funds for our local ministry?**

That position is a congregational model. The tithe is delivered to the storehouse. We are an established worldwide church – being one of the most stable churches in the world. See FAQ #8 and answer.

**15. How did we arrive at the practice that the conference is the storehouse to where we are supposed to return our tithes?**

Historically, people returned their tithe to their local synagogues and the tithe was then forwarded to the temple in Jerusalem (storehouse). For efficiency of distribution and accounting, the tithe is returned to the member's local church and systematically forwarded to the local conference.

**16. I've been returning my tithe on my gross salary for most all my life. Would it be correct to not return any tithe on my social security check?**

That it is a personal matter. A percentage of your social security check includes money that you contributed to the Social Security program. If you returned tithe on your gross income at the time the social security tax was deducted from your wages, then you have returned tithe on that percentage (tax withheld) and no tithe is required to be returned. Tithe is to be returned on the balance of your social security check. If you struggle with this, be safe. Give God the benefit. You will receive bonus benefits and blessings.

**17. I feel strongly about returning tithe; however, my mate does not believe we should return this amount of money. Should I return tithe anyway?**

The tithe belongs to God. It is His. It is holy. Returning tithe is the ultimate statement of our faith in and our love for God.

## **18. I really believe in what 3ABN is doing. Can I return my tithe to 3ABN?**

The tithe belongs to God. It is His. It is holy. Returning tithe is the ultimate statement of our faith in and our love for God.

## **19. Should I return tithe on my tax refund?**

Prov. 3:9 says, "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase." So is your tax return an increase? Did you return tithe on your gross income when taxes were deducted from your wages? If yes, then you are not obligated to return tithe a second time on the same income. But, if you were not expecting that refund, it then becomes a great opportunity to invest in your local building fund or other worthwhile ministry.

## **20. If I'm in business, do I return tithes on all the money I receive?**

Tithe is to be returned only on your increase. God is not overbearing. He only wants all of your heart.

## **21. Is tithing really a salvation issue?**

Salvation is God's gracious gift to all who willingly receive and accept Jesus as their Savior and as their Lord. Salvation certainly cannot be bought by faithfully returning our tithes. In Matthew 23: 23 is very clear about this: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former." Unfortunately we tend to marginalize the last part of what Jesus said. That's why Jesus in John 14:15 said that if you love me you will keep my commandments. Although tithing is not specifically listed as one of the ten commandments, God clearly has admonished us that stealing is wrong. It's bad enough when we steal things that belong to someone else; how much worse then could it be if a person stole from God! Malachi 3: 8 clearly identifies how we can end up taking what belongs to God by withholding our tithes and offerings to Him. Tithing is not a salvation issue in the sense that we cannot buy our way into Heaven; however, tithing is a salvation issue because it is one important way in which we demonstrate our faithfulness and trust in God. It is truly a fruit of our allegiance to the One who gave everything to ensure our salvation.

## **22. I was unemployed all of last year and did not return tithe. Is there a procedure to settle my obligation?**

In Genesis 14 Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything that the Lord provided for him. In Genesis 28, Jacob made a vow that he would return a tenth of all that God provided him. If a person had no income, God doesn't expect us to return a tithe on something that he hasn't provided for us. However, if there was any other source of income such as unemployment compensation or any other monetary assistance, we should faithfully return what belongs to the Lord. After all, He has promised us in Malachi 3:10 to "open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." There is no established procedure to settle your obligations to the Lord. That is between you and God, and as the Holy Spirit convicts you, you may return any back-tithe at anytime through your local church or directly to your conference headquarters. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in world session has established that the local conference will serve as the "storehouse" in the distribution of God's tithe resources for the fulfillment of His sacred work.