

Why Give Tithes?

Pandit teaches series

International edition

T. Pandit

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Introduction

This Bible study is presented in the form of a dialogue between a Bible teacher, Pandit, and his Indian student. In the end there are some questions, which can be used in group discussions. The groups should have 4-7 members each.

Student

I have heard that in some churches the pastor tells the believers that they must give tithes. But in other churches they do not ask for this. So, Pandit, what does the Bible teach about this? And what is your own opinion?

Pandit

Let us first look at what the Bible teaches. Then I will give you some of my own thoughts about tithing. The word “tithe” mean one tenth, and to “tithe” or “give tithes” means to give one tenth of what you have or what you earn. The first time the word “tithes” is used in the Bible is about **Abraham** (or Abram as he was still called then), and we read about it in Genesis chapter 14. Abraham was affected by a war between four kings on one side and five kings on the other side. Abraham’s nephew Lot and his people were taken captive in this war and all his property was carried off. But Abraham defeated the four kings and was able to recover all the goods and to save Lot and his people. Let us read the continuation of the story from the Bible:

The king of Sodom went out to meet Abram, after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, at the King’s Valley. Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High. He blessed him, and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, maker of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Gen 14:17-20)

So why do you think that Abraham gave a tenth of everything to Melchizedek?

Student

Perhaps he was happy that he had won a victory over the four kings and that Lot and his people had survived and were now being brought back to their hometown.

Pandit

Yes, he was certainly happy that God had blessed him and given him this success. Not only the lives of Lot and all his people had been saved but also all the goods had been recovered. So he gave a tenth of everything – that is of all the goods that had been recovered. He gave this to Melchizedek who was a priest and a servant of God as an expression of thankfulness to God who had blessed him. Next time we read about tithes is in connection with **Jacob**, who was Abraham's grandson. Jacob was not a very good man. He had cheated his brother Esau and was now running for his life. Let us read from Genesis chapter 28:

Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. He dreamed. Behold, a stairway set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. Behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed. Your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you, and will keep you, wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken of to you." Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I didn't know it." He was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than God's house, and this is the gate of heaven." Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothing to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and the Lord will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, will be God's house. Of all that you will give me I will surely give the tenth to you." (Gen 28:10-22)

So why did Jacob promise to give tithes to God?

Student

Perhaps he was afraid of God because God has spoken to him in this dream. So now he promised to give tithes to please God.

Pandit

No, I don't think that was the main reason. In this dream God had promised to be with Jacob and to bless him and his descendants, to give him the land and to multiply his offspring, to watch over him and to bring him back to his land, but also to be with him. So when Jacob had heard God's promises, he in his turn

made a promise to God. He would give tithes to God, if God kept his promises to him. So we can say that giving tithes was Jacob's way of sealing a covenant between God and himself.

Student

So in what way does this apply to us today?

Pandit

If God has kept his promises to us, is it not right for us to show our thankfulness to him by offering him our tithes? In this way we show that we want to be part of God's covenant with his people. The apostle Peter writes like this:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy became our father again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that doesn't fade away, reserved in heaven for you. (1 Pet 1:3-4)

Through Jesus Christ we have been born into a new life. Our sins have been forgiven and we have experienced his salvation. Through Jesus Christ we also can look forward to our inheritance in heaven. This is what God has done for us! There are many different ways we can respond to God and express our thankfulness for what he has done. One way is giving him our tithes.

Student

Yes, God has really blessed my life in so many different ways. I am really thankful to God for all that he has done for me and my family since we gave up our old life and turned to him. We no longer worship idols. My father has stopped drinking and beating my mother. And God has called me to serve him by sharing the gospel with other people. I have heard that the **Law of Moses** says many things about giving tithes. Can you please explain the main points to me?

Pandit

In the books of **Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy** there are some passages that present a very interesting and challenging system to us. We can almost call it a tax system, where the people of Israel had to pay tithes (or tax) so that those who did not have any income could survive. Let me explain. Moses led the people of Israel from captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land. Under the leadership of Joshua the land was conquered and distributed between the different tribes of Israel. Each tribe got a portion of the land so that they could live there. The land provided grazing for the sheep and the cattle. The land produced grain and

vegetables and fruit. So the land was the source of income for the tribe that lived in that area. But one tribe did not get any land, and that was the tribe of Levi. They were called the Levites. The Levites (and the priests, who were the descendants of Moses' brother Aaron and belonged to the tribe of Levi) were set aside by God to serve him in the Tent of Meeting (and later in the temple). That service was a full-time job, so they did not have the time to take care of sheep, cattle or fields. But if they did not get any income from the land, how could they get food so that they could survive? Let us read from the book of Numbers, where God speaks to Aaron:

"To the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting. ... But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. And among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. For the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'" (Num 18:21, 23-24)

God instructed the other eleven tribes to give one tenth of all the income from their lands to the Lord. And those tithes were God's inheritance to the Levites. So God did not give land as inheritance to the Levites. Instead he gave them the tithes of the other eleven tribes. In this way the Levites could fully concentrate on serving the Lord and did not have to worry about taking care of fields or sheep or cattle.

Student

What did the tithes consist of? Did the Israelites give their tithes in cash or kind?

Pandit

Normally the Israelites gave their tithes in kind. Let us read from Leviticus, where the Lord tells Moses to instruct the people like this:

"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's. It is holy to Yahweh. If a man redeems anything of his tithe, he shall add a fifth part to it. All the tithe of the herds or the flocks, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to Yahweh. He shall not search whether it is good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he changes it at all, then both it and that for which it is changed shall be holy. It shall not be redeemed." (Lev 27:30-33)

Here we find that it was possible for an Israelite to keep some grain or fruit and pay his tithes in cash instead – but then he had to add one fifth of the value! This would, however, not be done with animals. We also find that giving tithes in the Old Testament was a matter of quality. God told the Levites:

"Out of all the gifts you receive, you shall set apart every offering due to the Lord, the best of all of them, even the holy part of it of them." (Num 18:29)

Student

So you say that even the Levites themselves had to give tithes? I thought that they were the ones who received tithes, as they did not have any land of their own.

Pandit

Yes, even the Levites had to give tithes! Let us read from Numbers:

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Moreover you shall speak to the Levites, and tell them, 'When you receive from the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up an offering of it for the Lord, a tithe of the tithe. Your offering shall be reckoned to you, as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus you also shall offer an offering to the Lord of all your tithes, which you receive of the children of Israel; and of it you shall give the Lord's offering to Aaron the priest.'" (Num 18:25-28)

So the Levites gave their tithes to Lord, and this was used to support Aaron, who was the first in the line of the priests. In this chapter we can notice one interesting detail. In the beginning of the chapter God speaks to Aaron, instructing him to tell Israelites to give their tithes to the Levites. But in verse 25 God speaks to Moses – and not to Aaron – telling the Levites to give their tithes to Aaron (that is to the priests). So Aaron did not have to speak on his own behalf. He did not have to tell the Levites to give tithes to him and the other priests.

Student

So were the tithes in the Old Testament only used for the Levites and the priests?

Pandit

No. The Levites and the priests were not the only people in those days that did not have any income from the land. Again and again we read in the Old Testament about God's concern for three categories of people who were suffering much in those days – the alien (that is the stranger or the non-Israelite), the fatherless (or the orphan) and the widow. In Deuteronomy we read that God told the people that one kind of tithes should be used to support these people also:

"When you have finished the tithing all the tithe of your increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the foreigner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within your gates, and be filled." (Deut 26:12)

Student

Does the Old Testament say anything else about giving tithes?

Pandit

Yes, there are two aspects, which I think are very interesting. The first aspect is the link between religious standards and the giving of tithes. I will give one example of what I mean. After the death of king Solomon the people of Israel were divided into two kingdoms. In the north there was the kingdom of Israel and all the kings there turned their backs to God and followed the evil ways of the people around them. Finally in 722 BC that kingdom was occupied and totally destroyed by the Assyrian emperor. In the south there was the kingdom of Judah, where all the kings were the descendants of king David and king Solomon. Most of these kings also turned their backs to God and followed the evil ways of the people around them. But around 700 BC there was a good king. His name was **Hezekiah** and we can read about him in the book called Second Chronicles:

Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old. And he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them together into the broad place on the east, and said to them, "Hear me, you Levites. Now sanctify yourselves and sanctify the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers and carry out the filth out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the sight of the Lord our God. They have forsaken him. They have turned away their faces from the dwelling of the Lord and turned their backs on him. ... Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger may turn away from us ..." Also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and with the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order. Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, because of that which God had prepared for the people: for the thing was done suddenly. (2 Chron 29:1, 3-6, 10, 35-36)

As one part of the spiritual reformation the practice of giving tithes was renewed.

Hezekiah commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the law of the Lord. As soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. The children of Israel and Judah, who lived in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of dedicated

things which were consecrated to the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps. (2 Chron 31:4-6)

So here we can see that the Israelites were happy to give their tithes – and they gave generously – because they had a king, who wanted to serve God faithfully and who purified the temple and restored the religious practices. Do you understand this point?

Student

Yes, Pandit. When the king of Judah did the right thing and followed the ways of God, then the people also wanted to do the right thing, so they generously gave their tithes. So what is the second interesting aspect?

Pandit

We have a very important passage in **Malachi**, which is the last book of the Old Testament. I will read it to you. This is what God says to the people: “

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my ordinances and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of Hosts. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with the curse; for you rob me, even this whole nation. Bring the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground. Neither shall your vine cast its fruit before its time in the field,” says the Lord of Hosts. “All nations shall call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the Lord of Hosts. (Mal 3:7-12)

Student

So what does God actually say to the people? I don’t quite understand it. Could you please explain it to me, Pandit?

Pandit

God says that if the people turn to him and leave the evil ways of their forefathers, God on his part would turn to them and bless them. The people had not given their tithes, so they had actually robbed God and the temple of the resources that were needed in the temple. As a result of this ill deed the whole country had been cursed – pests had eaten the crops and there was famine. But as they start to give their tithes, God would bless them and their land in a wonderful way. And when the surrounding nations see how God is blessing the

people of God, they in their turn will be surprised at what God has done. Do you understand this passage now?

Student

Yes, I do. It is really a wonderful passage. God is really a wonderful God! But so far you have only spoken about matters from the Old Testament. What does the New Testament say about tithes? That must be more important to us as believers.

Pandit

The stories from the Old Testament have much to tell us about how God spoke to the people of Israel in those days. And we can learn so many things from these stories. But to us as believers **the New Testament** and what it teaches is more important. One problem for us as we study this topic is that the New Testament doesn't say much at all about tithes.

Student

That seems really strange. Does that mean that it is not important for us as believers to give tithes?

Pandit

Wait a bit! Don't jump into wrong conclusions! Let me explain. The New Testament view is that everything belongs to God, not only a tenth of what we earn. That is the main reason why there is not teaching about giving tithes in the New Testament. But let me explain some texts before I say anything else. **Jesus** himself only mentions tithes twice. The first time is in a conversation with the Jewish leaders. I will read it to you:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done this without neglecting the other." (Matt 23:23)

The same occasion is also recorded in Luke 11:42). Here Jesus is scolding the Jewish leaders – not because they are giving tithes of even small things like spices, but because they are neglecting more important matters like justice, mercy and faithfulness. The second time is in the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee is very proudly bragging about his high spiritual standards in his prayer to God:

"The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: 'God, I thank you, that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.'" (Luke 18:11-12)

But Jesus was not impressed! He scolded the Pharisee for his pride.

Student

But, Pandit, does this mean that Jesus was scolding the Pharisees because they gave tithes?

Pandit

Of course not! He was scolding them because they were proud and unrighteous and merciless, not because they gave tithes. All good Jews in those days gave tithes. I am sure that Jesus himself and all his disciples gave tithes. That was a normal thing to do. But let us go to the apostle **Paul** before we make any conclusions. Paul does not mention the word "tithes" in his letters. But in his first letter to the Corinthians he is arguing with the believers about support to gospel workers:

My defense to those who examine me is this. Have we no right to eat and to drink? ... Or have only Barnabas and I no right to not work? What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and doesn't eat of its fruit? Or who feeds a flock, and doesn't drink from the flock's milk? Do I speak these things according to the ways of men? Or doesn't the law also say the same thing? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it for the oxen that God cares, or does he say it assuredly for our sake? Yes, it was written for our sake, because he who plows ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should partake of his hope. If we sowed to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your fleshly things? ... Don't you know that those who serve around sacred things eat from the things of the temple, and those who wait on the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so the Lord ordained that those who proclaim the gospel should live from the gospel. (1 Cor 9:3-4, 6-11, 13-14)

Here Paul very clearly writes that gospel workers should be supported by those who benefit from their ministry.

Student

Yes, I understand that. But what does Paul mean when he writes "the Lord as commanded"?

Pandit

I think that he is referring to two things. The first, and most obvious one, is the story about Jesus sending out 72 disciples to preach the gospel, and he tells them:

"Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' ... Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Don't go from house to house." (Luke 10:5, 7)

The second, and not so obvious one, is that Jesus accepted the traditional Jewish system of giving tithes to support the Levites and the priests, to pay for the expenses of the temple, and to support the poor – the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Another, very personal point, that Paul is making in his argument with the Corinthians is that even if he has the right to receive support from them, he has chosen not to do so, because he wants to keep his independence:

If others have this rightful claim on you, don't we still more? But we did not use this right. Instead we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. ... Even so the Lord ordained that those who proclaim the gospel should live from the gospel. But I have used none of these things. (1 Cor 9:12, 14-15)

But we should not misinterpret what Paul writes here! Believers should support the ministry – even if Paul himself refused to receive any support! So, now I have explained to you some important texts in the New Testament.

Student

But, Pandit, isn't there any commandment in the New Testament about giving tithes?

Pandit

No, there isn't! Jesus only speaks about two old commandments – and one new one. The old commandments are:

"'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. A second one is like this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matt 22:37-39)

And the new one is:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another." (John 13:34)

In his epistles Paul explain to the churches the foundational truths about the gospel of Jesus Christ. He also teaches them how to live sanctified lives under the influence of the Holy Spirit. But he has no commandment about tithing!

Student

So why should believers give tithes? Please tell me, Pandit!

Pandit

I will give you **five reasons why we should give tithes**.

1. Everything that we have belongs to God: King David writes like this in one of his psalms: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and all who dwell in it (Psalm 24:1). God has created everything. He is the Lord of the universe. Through Jesus Christ he has bought us, who had turned our backs to God and who were walking on our own sinful paths, back to him: you were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). So we should not only present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Romans 12:1) and give ourselves completely to the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). But we should give our resources to God and to his work, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

2. Money is necessary for the ministry: You need money to maintain your own family: food, clothes, school fees, medical, travel, rent etc, don't you? In a similar way money is needed for the ministry. The pastor must somehow maintain his family. If he has a job or if he works on his land or keeps cows or sheep, he can manage his family. But then he will not have much time for the ministry. If he spends much time in the ministry, then he doesn't have time or opportunity earn money through a job etc to support his family. The church also needs money for direct ministry: travel for village outreach, to buy gospel literature, to arrange special meetings etc. Then it costs money to have some place to gather for the worship service. Either you have to pay rent for a hall or you have to maintain your own church building: water, electricity, repairs etc. Perhaps you want to buy material for the worship services: song books, instruments etc. Finally most churches come in contact with people who really need help: widows, orphans, accident cases, sick people etc. So money is really needed for the ministry! A good method for a church to have regular income is when all the believers faithfully give their tithes. Then the church will be able to carry out its work without any financial worries.

3. Tithing is a good model: God instituted the tithing model to support the ministry in the Old Testament. Through the tithes the Levites and priests were set free to do their duties. Through the tithes the temple sacrifices could be maintained. Through the tithes the really needy people – aliens, fatherless and widows – could be helped. We also have reason to believe that the tithing model worked well even in the New Testament churches, even if there is no detailed information about it. Jesus thought that it was good that the Jews gave tithes.

Paul clearly writes that the gospel workers should be supported by the local church. Tithing is a model, which has been tested over thousands of years, and there is every reason to believe that it can work even in our times. Yes, it really does work! Many believers' churches these days encourage the tithing model, and both the ministry and the believers are blessed.

4. It is logical and fair: I have met some people in churches, who have said like this: "My family is very poor, so it is not possible for us to give tithes!" Then I have met other people, who have said: "I have a big business and earn a lot of money. I cannot give tithes, because one tenth of my income is too much money to give!" These two examples show that giving tithes is probably just right! One tenth of a small income is exactly one tenth. And one tenth of a huge income is also exactly one tenth. One tenth is always one tenth! The poor family and the rich family are both affected to the same extent. This shows that tithing is both logical and fair!

5. It is practical: In the book of Acts (chapter 2) we read that the church in Jerusalem had an amazing practice: the believers sold everything they had and gave all the money to the church, and then the church, of course, had to support them. The text doesn't say how long the Jerusalem church continued with this practice. But we know that other New Testament churches did not do like this. It is really much more practical for the individual believers' families, if they do not follow the Jerusalem model. If the family instead decides to give tithes regularly, there is no need for them to worry about how much they should give to the church. To give less than on tenth would be embarrassing. But of course they can give more if they want, as long as they don't neglect their family responsibilities. Tithing is a very practical rule of thumb!

Student

Yes, Pandit, these five reasons for tithing all seem very convincing. Is there anything else you would like teach me about tithes, before we finish this lesson?

Pandit

Yes, there are **six more things**, which I would like to point out to you before we close for today.

1. Teach about tithing: It is important that the pastor of a church teaches the believers about tithing. This teaching should be done in an open and positive way. The pastor doesn't need to feel embarrassed about this topic. He is not begging money for himself. Tithes are for the ministry, and the ministry is more than the pastor. It is also easier and less embarrassing if the pastor doesn't handle

the church finances himself! Tithing is something very positive. God will surely bless those who give their tithes with a cheerful heart.

2. Don't force believers to tithe: No pastor should force his believers to tithe. Tithing is a matter between the individual believer (or perhaps his family) and God. I have heard of pastors, who tell their believers something like this: "If you don't want to give your tithes, you can simply leave the church!" This is not a biblical way of handling the subject of tithing!

3. The pastor should set a good example for the flock: Most pastors in India do not bother to tithe. They may even think that they stand above this practice. But in the Old Testament the Levites, who were full-time workers for God at that time, gave tithes! I think that pastors should set a good example for their flock also in this matter. How can they expect the believers to give their tithes with a cheerful heart, if they themselves don't do it?

4. Tithes should go to the local church: The local church needs money for its ministry. You should be a member of the local church where you live and work, and your tithes should go to that church. It is not a good practice to send your tithes to your home church, or to the church where you were baptized, or to the pastor who brought you to the Lord.

5. Special offerings or gifts are not tithes: There is nothing wrong if you want to send money to your home church or to the pastor who brought you to Christ. It is also not wrong to give money to projects or ministries at other places, perhaps to the radio ministry or to a famous evangelist whose work you would like to support, or perhaps to another church, which is struggling financially. Also, of course, it is very good to give money to special projects in your local church, perhaps for a church building or to buy a good sound system. But these special offerings or gifts should not be considered part of your tithes. That kind of money should be given over and above your regular tithes.

6. Tithes reveal the condition of a church: I think that tithes reveal the spiritual condition of a church in two different ways. First, if the believers give their tithes regularly and with a cheerful heart it shows that they are mature children of God and that they want to take responsibility for the ministry in their local church. The Lord will surely bless them for this maturity and responsibility. Second, tithing also reflects the maturity and spiritual standard of the pastor and other leaders of a local church. If the believers have confidence in the leadership – how they run the church, how they handle church money, how they encourage and support the believers – then the believers will be happy to give their tithes. If the believers appreciate the way the pastor is doing his job – preparing his sermons well, spending time listening to God's guidance for the church, working hard for the salvation of new souls, sincerely caring for his flock – then the believers will be happy to give their tithes. But if they believe they do not have

confidence in the pastor and the other church leaders, they will show that by not giving their tithes to the church. So in these two ways tithes reveal the spiritual condition of the church! My dear student, now this lesson about tithing has come to an end. I hope that you have enjoyed it and also learnt something that will be useful to you. May the Lord bless you!

Student

Yes, Pandit. Your lesson has been both interesting and useful. I have learnt many new things, which will be of great value for me, both now as I involve myself in my local church and in the future as I go out as a full-time gospel worker myself. Thank you very much, Sir!

Questions for group discussion

Instructions

There should 4-7 persons in each group. Each person in the group should contribute to the discussion and share thoughts and experiences. Be careful that nobody speaks too much or dominates the discussion.

Questions

1. Why did Abraham give tithes to Melchizedek?
2. Why did Jacob promise to give tithes to God?
3. What does the apostle Peter say that we have received from God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3-4)?
4. What are the things in your own life that God has given you and that you are thankful for?
5. Explain the system of tithing in the Old Testament.
6. Why was part of the tithes also used to support the alien, the fatherless and the widow?
7. Why did the Israelites again start giving tithes during the reign of king Hezekiah?
8. Explain in your own words what God says about giving tithes in Malachi chapter 3.
9. What did Jesus tell the Pharisees who were proud because they gave tithes even on small things like spices?
10. What does Paul write about giving to the ministry?
11. Give some reasons why tithing is a good model. Share your own experience:
12. Do you tithe? Why? Why not?
13. How is tithing practiced in your church?
14. How does your pastor teach about tithing? Are believers forced to tithe? Are believers encouraged to tithe?
15. How are the tithes used in your church?
16. Does your church struggle financially? What would happen if the believers gave their tithes faithfully?
17. Has this lesson been of any use to you? In what way?

Bible quotations

All Bible quotations are based on the World English Bible (WEB) translation,

The author

T. Pandit has many years of experience as an educationist, as a Bible teacher and as a college principal, in India as well as internationally.

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