

General Topics :: "enforced" tithing?

"enforced" tithing? - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2005/8/28 23:41

I am not looking to start a debate per se, except to try to understand Biblically the difference between old testament, old covenant tithing and new testament church giving Biblical principles.

This is a personal story as well and looking for thoughts for discussion, not sympathy.

I attend a church and six years ago when I joined the church as a member, one of the agreements to becoming a member was to tithe 10% of your gross income. There are other agreements in addition which I think are fine, but this one I have been doing and not having a peace about the "agreement" part.

The church we attend was renting a building, and also pays a senior pastor, another pastor and a secretary's salary, in addition to other typical church expenses.

Recently the church we attend went and purchased a \$400,000 church building and mortgaged about \$300,000 of this building. They planned on the mortgaging part on the tithing habits a year ago, but over the past year, many men have been out of work, some people, come and go and some have stopped tithing that are members.

Now the church is hurting financially and not making ends meet to pay for their budget and the pastor is looking to meet with current members who have agreed to tithe but have currently stopped.

I am one of them. I have wrestled with the "agreed" part to tithing vs. the "cheerful" giver of the heart part. I have faithfully tithe for many years to our local church, but lately have struggled with the local church structure and the money going to pay for new carpet, salaries, programs that do not serve the poor, widows, fatherless and ministries that could use the money to reach the lost for Christ.

I am supposed to have a meeting with my pastor this week to discuss what has changed. Finances have been very tight for my family as well and I have been learning more towards providing for my family first (so that I am not worse than an infidel) vs. giving to the local church.

I believe in giving my money and hold it loosely, but lately I have had to use my credit card a few times to feed my family ... I'm not liking that!

Is the tithe supposed to go the Local church? or was that something that was created along the way after ACTS and the new testament church model?

Has anyone wrestled with this type of situation? Is this typical? or am I just not obeying Biblical tithing and must obey God here and deal?

In Christ,
Doug

Re: "enforced" tithing? - posted by HopeinChrist, on: 2005/8/29 0:09

I do believe in tithing but have never heard of a church making a tithing agreement. That sounds controlling and manipulative. God loves a cheerful giver. I don't believe he would be pleased with a forced offering.

Does your church tithe? It is hard to teach what is not practiced. Our ministry began tithing early this year and it is amazing what has happened with the tithes and offerings coming in. Some areas we sow into include Sudan, missionary family in Scotland, Samaritans purse, a local christian listener supported radio station and will likely be adding voice of the martyrs and gospel for Asia next month.

Hope

Re: - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2005/8/29 0:11

Our church is non-denominational and has spiritual covering over one pastor and I believe they tithe to this pastor currently in some way. I'm not sure though. I do know that our church gives to regular missions, but not sure if this is 10% of what the church brings in every week.

In Christ,
Doug

Re: "enforced" tithing? - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/8/29 1:05

doug,

I am really analyzing the whole tithing concept. Something about our huge buildings and nice furniture, and lack of witnessing and holiness isn't right. Not just my church, but pretty much most all that I know of.

I keep reading the word where in OT and NT and this is what I think it means. No one taught me this, so weigh it to see whether or not the Spirit gave it to me.

What does a whore do? She provides temporary pleasure in exchange for money. Isn't this what the majority of churches are doing right now? Offering you a little good feeling, just a little pleasantness, and we give the money. Something about this isn't right. How about the size of our buildings vs. the size of the prayer meetings? Think about these things and read these verses. I can't see anything else but what is going on right now:

Ezekiel 16:

24 "That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street."

25b "(Thou)hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms."

33 "They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom."

As far as the local church goes, I'm with John Rice on this one. He said to ask of the Lord what to do with our tithe, not your pastor. John taught that your tithe may partially or completely be given to anyone that is getting out the gospel. But a gain, it is important that we ask of God.

Ezekiel 13:

2-3 "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!"

7-8a "For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which... cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man..."

Re: ethics considered - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/8/29 3:19

Quote:

-----I have wrestled with the "agreed" part to tithing vs. the "cheerful" giver of the heart part. I have faithfully tithed for many years to our local church, but lately have struggled with the local church structure and the money going to pay for new carpet, salaries, programs that do not serve the poor, widows, fatherless and ministries that could use the money to reach the lost for Christ.

After reading your original post, I want to make sure that the issue here is enforced tithing...and not one of volunteer obligation. From your posted testimony, it is unclear to what degree you have given your word specifically to your pastor that

Do you support his decision to assume a high debt load. An agreement to tithe is not an empowerment to build. My response does not address the scriptural validity of tithing per se, but any possible ethical obligations you may or may not have entered into...namely giving explicit, (not implied) authority to your pastor to borrow \$300K to buy a new church.

I hear similar testimonies to yours expressing "buyer's remorse" more and more from churches these days. I don't have any stats but I'd be willing to guess that the boom 90's boosted the "faith" of many churches in America. Now that the economy is comparatively sluggish, the accepted doctrine of "build it and they will come" is being tested.

What happens when a congregation has discovered they have overbuilt? How do we respond when unemployment rates go up within the ranks of our churches? Do the people leave leadership responsible to the lender alone? Personally I am mystified how easy it is for churches to get large commercial loans merely based on the giving records of unsigned parties. Clearly the equity value of the real estate is allowing the bank management to approve of these situations.

Like I said, I wasn't sure how deep you were in your church's decision to purchase its building. I feel there is an ethical obligation if you have promised specifically to help service heavy debt obligations that were dutifully and fully disclosed ahead of time. If your promise was key in the church's decision or key in their authority to negotiate with the bank, then I think you carry an ethical, (but obviously not legal), responsibility to help find a solution.

Now, there are many situations where the congregation was left out of these decisions, where optimistic leadership made unilateral or deacon level commitments to a creditor on behalf of the whole church. In this case I do not see that there is an ethical commitment...though there may be other personal grounds to continue giving. It is important to note: A signed agreement to tithe can not be construed into carte blanche authority for church leadership to enter into debt agreements on behalf of the tither. I feel strongly that church leadership is obligated to disclose all debt to the community antecedently.

Here are my two suggestions for negating any possible ethical obligation.

1) If you feel the debt load is an unacceptable risk to your family then ask the church for a period of recovery for you. If there are too many families asking for the same thing then apparently the church is in over its head, and it may be a responsible course of action to put the property up for sale. I see no reason not to approach the families in the church, with or without the pastor's permission, with a plan to have another church assume the building loan. After all, if you have agreed to your part in this debt, then you have your say in paying it back.

2) Ask for release from your commitment. If the church is able to meet its obligations without you, you might be surprised how benevolent people will be.

In the end, you can only do what you can do. While being mindful of ethics, I believe your first and legal commitment is to any personal or business debt that bears your own signature. The church leadership knew when it signed the debt load that they had only the verbal commitments of its people to warrant the ability to pay. Indeed, the bank understood this as well.

I'll reiterate my personal conviction, that if the church is on a default vector then it is probably time to market the property. For instance, my own church sold its property to the city government to be used as office space. I realize finding such a buyer could present its own challenges and still might not remove 100% of the debt...but it will make the problem much more manageable.

One day we Americans may yet learn that stepping out on credit is not faith. I pray this wisdom finds its way into those churches that accept unspiritual burdens into the community.

God bless you Doug. Keep us posted brother.

MC

Re:, on: 2005/8/29 7:31

Boy, this is a pretty deep topic. There are many things here that all add up to one big mess.

I'll just give my personal convictions on some of these things... thats about all any of us can do on here anyway.

#1 tithing: When someone finds tithing being taught in the NT please let me know. In 10 years of being saved I have not found it. What I have found is Christian giving. Jesus tithed, true. And he commended the Pharisees for tithing. (Note He chewed them out for ignoring other things tho) But this was before the Law was fulfilled by Christ's death and resurrection on the cross. Once that happened, things changed. We no longer participate in temple sacrifices. We no longer live by the OT law, but rather live in freedom thru Jesus Christ. The Jewish government was originally supposed to be a theocracy, and the tithes that went into the temple (storehouse) were more like a tax. It fed the poor, and it took care of the Jewish nation. Where do we see that today? We dont. We pay taxes, AND are expected to tithe.

But what did Paul teach? 1Co 16:1-3 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

The money was going to feed the poor. The church in Jerusalem was in a really bad situation. So the Church in Corinth was helping them out. Not buying new fancy hymnals.

Also... 2Co 9:6,7 *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; **not grudgingly, or of necessity**: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

Basically... if we're giving out of obligation, God doesnt want it. It would be like one of our kids giving us a present, but doing it because they have to and not because they want to.

#2 Church membership: I dont find the style of church membership that is usually insisted on here in the US in the NT. It's far more easier to be washed of our sins, and gain everlasting life than it is to join most churches. Why do churches have "membership"? Voting purposes. I dont agree with voting in church either. The majority can be wrong. I'd rather be listening to the heartbeat of the Savior than someone's straw poll about what direction the church should be taking.

#3 Signing covenants: This is what you have done, and therefore you have made commitments that I'm sure in retrospect you regret. The scripture says: Jam 5:12 *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.* "Lest ye fall into condemnation" basically is saying that if you swear an oath, and break that oath, you have sinned. Whereas, if you had never taken an oath to begin with, you would not have sinned. That even applies to tithing. The only way to get out of the oath is to go to the person whom you swore the oath to (in this case, your church) and repent and ask to be released from the oath.

And this brings up the funny thing about churches having people sign oaths to begin with, considering that Jam 5:12 exhorts believers not to swear oaths.

#4 Churches and debt: Churches should not carry mortgages. Just my opinion. There are those who can argue both ways concerning debt... but I just think that debt is a killer. I'm a (self employed) structural engineer. I know how much constructing a new building costs. I've worked on a lot of church projects. I've also seen many churches fold because they have to have that million dollar building... but go too far into debt. And when the financial strain hits the church they start asking people why they aren't tithing, and every other Sunday is a sermon about tithing. You can tell a church that is having financial trouble because the tithing issue comes to the forefront. Not feeding the poor, not evangelizing... money.

Now... you need to feed your family first. I promise you, **GOD** is not asking you to use your credit cards at the grocery store so you can tithe! Your pastor might, but God isn't. You need to talk to your pastor about the oath you took. If I made sense to you, and you agreed, then you need to repent before him, and ask that you be released from that oath. He will probably refuse, and will try to reason with you about why tithing is for today. I've heard every angle there is, and some are very convincing... yet it doesn't square up with NT teachings on giving. At any rate, if he doesn't agree, and will not release you from your oath... then the only alternative will be to leave, and get out from under it. I'm not asking you to rebel!! Don't misunderstand. I'm asking you to search the scriptures, and pray and seek God concerning this. He may well work

it out so you can stay in that church. You may consider asking that your membership be dropped so you can stay but not be under oath... tho personally, I think your pastor wont want you there because your "leaven" might leaveneth the whole lump. Right now he needs people who will tithe, not people who might cause people not to.

It's a sticky situation, and there really is no easy way to deal with it. But Petra had a song a number of years ago with a line in it that goes like this...

*I dont wanna be a man pleaser
I wanna be a **God pleaser**
I just want the wisdom to
Discern the two apart...*

No matter what happens... be a **God** pleaser.

Quote:
-----One day we Americans may yet learn that stepping out on credit is not faith. I pray this wisdom finds its way into those churches that accept unspiritual burdens into the community.

AMEN!!

Krispy

Re: tithes/taxes - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/8/29 8:08

Quote:
-----I'm not asking you to rebel!!

I think your words are very helpful, Crispy. I agree that there are higher principles to consider. I think of those who under deception submitted themselves to a cultic, controlling type of organization. It is wrong to remain in bondage to anything that becomes unethical.

I also have come to understand that the tithes were compulsory donations -- like our taxes -- given to support the nation on Israel, including the needy. We already give taxes (obligatory) to help the poor. However, the government can't do a satisfactory job. Besides that, we have no personal connection with the needy. And that means, we never get a chance to be as Christ to them.

I suspect that when we give primarily to institutions and its buildings, as expected of us, we lose touch with those who really need our help. We may also be enabling a system to continue that shouldn't, or that doesn't need more money.

I have come to believe that, as much as possible, we must use our resources to DIRECTLY touch people -- not only through organizations or institutions. Personal gestures of giving enables us to build a relationship with those to whom we give.

A small example: For me to purchase an appropriate book and hand it to someone personally (whether in or outside of my church) would be more effective than merely contributing a financial donation to the library. I can discuss the book with the person, hold them accountable, and continue a relationship that promotes growth. (I learned this from experience)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Where our money goes is where our heart goes -- which could become be a misplaced affection. Worse yet, we may gain a false sense of security -- that we have received God's approval - because we are doing our "duty". We missed the point of giving.

We must use our own minds to CONTINUALLY judge these things- and CONTINUALLY examine our motivation for giving

ving. Red lights should be flashing in our mind as soon we are sensing some pressure or obligation. Even a legitimate need does not necessarily remain a need forever, even though the leaders say otherwise.
Diane

Re:, on: 2005/8/29 8:24

Roadsign... that was a most excellent post! You are so right. What ends up happening when we merely give to an institution instead of actually doing the footwork ourselves is we allow said institution to basically live our Christian walk for us. That is NOT what God wants.

I remember when we were still part of the institutional church my wife and I had been studying this very topic on our own ... and had drawn many of these conclusions about tithing from scripture. We were at Pizza Hut one night for the sole purpose of finding someone and just paying for their meal without them knowing it. We had our two oldest with us (the two younger were not born yet) and we looked around the dining room asking God who to bless this way.

There was a young couple a few booths away who had 2 small kids. The dad looked to be in his early 20's, and looked like he worked construction or something. His boots were caked with mud, and he was sweaty. The mom looked a bit haggard, but smiling. Obviously they weren't lazy, but appeared to be just making it. So we called the waitress over and told her we wanted to pay their bill. Our kids got such a neat kick out of the whole experience, and it was wonderful to let the kids be involved in personally blessing someone!

Well, when I got into a discussion with the pastor about tithing later on, I relayed this story. He informed me that we were wrong to do that if the money came out of our tithe money (which it did). After all... the church has people in place who are to decide where the money is spent, and there are safe guards in place to keep the church from being taken advantage of by people who are perpetual beggars.

What an attitude! And what about me being able to be led by the Holy Spirit? Are we to be led by the Holy Spirit, or by some church board?

By the way... be careful paying the bill for people in a restaurant. We wanted to remain anonymous... and we had no way of knowing that the father in this story had an ex-girlfriend... who happened to be working in the kitchen of this Pizza Hut. When the waitress told them their bill had been paid, the mother assumed it was the ex-girlfriend who paid it. Things were a little tense for a minute. Finally the ex-g'friend came out and denied paying it. The waitress finally came over and said "No sweetie... it someone in the dining room and they said they just wanted to bless you."

So it almost backfired! We still get a chuckle out of that story.

But you're right, Roadsign.. God wants to bless us by allowing us to bless others. We can't do that thru an institution. We miss out on what God wants for us.

Krispy

Re: - posted by Nellie, on: 2005/8/29 10:53

I don't believe that pressure should ever be put on Christians to give

I was in a Revival Service, and the Pastor said, Let's bless the Evangelist with I believe he said \$10,000. He said this like it was a \$1.00.

When pressure is put on, all it does is make the poor feel bad because they don't have it to give. We have some poor people in our Church, and my heart reaches out to them.

The Holy Spirit showed me to give some money to a Mother, to buy some clothes for her Children. I was to specify to her that it was to be used for this purpose. I didn't do this in front of anyone, but just her.

Krispy, I feel like the last Scripture that you used in 2 Cor. 9:7, is very appropriate for Christians, today. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a che

erful giver. 2 Cor. 9:7.

God Bless all of you.
I really do love this site.
I have learned from you, and been blessed.
Nellie :-)

Re: "enforced" tithing? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/8/29 12:59

At my church if one wishes to be considered a member in good standing, is required to tithe. All those who wish to hold official ministry positions are required to tithe. My tithing is pretty much modern day circumcision. I do it because if I did not, many would be offended that I don't, and would have nothing to do with my ministry because they would consider me "cursed."

However, if I had to choose between tithing vs. keeping my family fed, I would choose keeping my family fed... even if I did believe tithing was required under the New Testament. The principle behind tithing in the OT was in order to keep people fed. It existed to feed the priests, Levites, and the poor. It did not exist in order to put clothes on people's back, to help in maintaining the temple building, or even putting clothes on the back of others. If the temple needed upkeep, they took up special offerings for that... they did not use the tithe for such.

Therefore, it is unmerciful and contradicts the purpose of tithing if in order to properly keep your tithe up, you are required to take food off your own family's table. Jesus said the weightier matters of the law are justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These are the principles that are to govern which is of chief importance. Because these matters are of chief importance and more weighty, David and his men ate consecrated bread from the tabernacle that was for the priests alone to eat from. But, because they were without, the priest gave what was actually his by law to help feed the hungry.

Of course, there would be those false teachers out there that would attempt to deceive the poor, and would say that if you are poor, the way to get out of your poverty is to tithe. They might even label that this is "kingdom economics" and quote you many success stories of people who could not afford to tithe, and did so anyway. Of course, they never bother to mention the many people who did such and never got out of poverty. Feeding your own family takes priority to feeding others. Such is what the law teaches. Remember, the letter kills but the spirit gives life. It is against the spirit of tithing to take food you and your family need out of your own mouth to put it in the mouth of somebody else.

At the same time though, feeding your family should not be done in luxury. Like, you might view coffee as essential to breakfast. However, getting a Grande Mocha Frappacino at Starbucks would not qualify as such. Such would break the spirit of the law.

Re: - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2005/8/29 14:42

Quote:
-----From your posted testimony, it is unclear to what degree you have given your word specifically to your pastor that you support his decision to assume a high debt load.

As a member I never spoke up to the elders about 'buying' the church, but was not in favor of it because of what God was showing me about money, home church and other related topics. I guess I gave my non-verbal support by not speaking against it. I assume the leadership was going to do what they wanted and not listen to one person who was against buying a building. I have always had trouble with church buildings, finances in the church, not going to more eternal purposes. I am learning here, as well as humility.

In Christ,
Doug

Re: "enforced" tithing? - posted by ccchhhrrriiss () , on: 2005/8/29 16:15

Hi dougkristen...!

I experienced a similar situation a few years ago at the church that I attended at the time.

The pastor had begun experimenting with some radical elements of the modern "prosperity" message (which I totally disagreed with). He attended one of the "*faith*" conventions in Tulsa (home of the Copelandites, Haginites and Duplantis ites, etc...). Of course, the bulk of the messages at the convention concerned physical "blessings" (money, houses, cars , etc...). One of the preachers told the listeners that he sometimes asks his congregation to hold their offerings *above their heads*. Then he tells everyone to look around. He then asks, "Now, are you embarrassed of your gift to the Lord? If so, then reach into your pocket and **give more!**" This prosperity preacher also boasted that he checks the tax rolls to see who is giving the most, because "*those who give the most are always blessed.*"

So the pastor came home and did the same thing! Of course, in our church, this caused quite a bit of offense. The Pastor or even *called people into his office* to discuss their giving habits (or what he thought was a *lack* of giving). Eventually, he called me into his office too. He asked me why I was not giving more to the Lord. I told him that I am extremely dedicated to my tithe -- but that I usually pay it in cash, using unmarked envelopes. The pastor looked at me quite skeptically. He asked, "Well, what am I supposed to tell people who ask me if you are paying your tithe?" I told the pastor, "Well, you can tell them that it is none of their business. Tithing is between me and the Lord." I explained my beliefs about giving -- that it should be done in secret, and without an "investment attitude" (wanting to **give so that you can get**). The pastor became quite frustrated by my comments. "So you don't think that anyone should know what you give?" he asked. I told him that I don't feel that I need to give an account to anyone of my giving other than God -- and God alone. I told the pastor that he should trust me at my word (that I do indeed tithe), and that if he doesn't, I could always go somewhere where the pastor is more trusting of his congregation.

The pastor rather quickly said, "No, no...don't do that! I am just wanting to see if people are tithing or not." I suggested that he might consider the notion that some people might hold the same idea that I do about giving in secret. He dismissed that, saying it sounded very "silly."

Eventually, the pastor became quite engrossed in extreme beliefs about the modern prosperity movement. He started stating that all sickness is the result of hidden sin, and that if you are truly serving God with faith, your shoes, clothes, cars , houses and even your body will never get old. He even began teaching that your material possessions are a direct reflection of your spiritual life -- the more you have, the more faith you have. This became one of the factors that made me realize that my beliefs differed too much from the church. I eventually left that church and began attending another church in the town.

You might let your pastor know what you believe about giving -- whether you think that it is a private matter or not. I just don't like the thought about giving so "proudly." It reminds me so much of the rich men giving at the Temple out of their abundance.

:-)

Re: - posted by dougkristen () , on: 2005/8/29 16:33

Thanks for sharing this... I'm not alone..

My pastor has said that "we are always tithing and that we either tithe to God or ourselves/satan, etc." And that we too will reap the consequences if we don't tithe, such as problems with finances... It's like tithing is a magic pill which I have believed for quite some time... If I tithe, my finances will be great and I'll be fine... (which has not been the case for me even when I have been tithing) or God will curse your finances because you are sinning against God and stealing from Him by not tithing to your "local church" that you attend and are a member of...

A year ago when I was in our monthly men's meeting before we the church building was purchased we had to fill out a piece of paper stating what we would be tithing each week so that they could budget their church expenses. About 3 months ago when I was not tithing due to shortages of finances, the financial deacon confronted me on my "change of giving patterns" and asked me what's up. I said, that I had to use my credit card to buy groceries and that I have been hurting financially but that I would give as able...

I have a phone meeting with my pastor this Wednesday to 'discuss' this. Pray for me.

I'll keep you posted.

In Christ,
Doug

Re: maybe you need to receive for a time - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/8/29 16:58

Quote:

-----I said, that I had to use my credit card to buy groceries and that I have been hurting financially but that I would give as able...

Perhaps it is the church's responsibility to help YOU. I think that is a biblical principle. (I'm trying to find the reference.) If people give properly, then no one is in need. It is not wrong to be on the side of need. But it is ALWAYS wrong to give out of obligation. It is wrong for anyone to use manipulation, domination, and control to squeeze money out of people.

To give to the church out of obligation and pressure is like spiritual adultery - betraying your loyalty to God. God says it is wrong, wrong, wrong. So you would be just as sinful to give if God doesn't want you to, as the pastor who seduces you to give.

If all Christians followed these Biblical principles then there wouldn't be so many false prophets on the loose.

Diane

Re: - posted by Nellie, on: 2005/8/29 17:11

Amen, Diane.

God Bless

Nellie :-)

Re: - posted by PassingThru, on: 2005/8/29 17:31

I find the examples of George Muller and Hudson Taylor inspiring. Neither believed in asking people for the finances for their ministries - They asked God instead.

A true ministry is God's project, not man's. As it is His project, I can't believe that He will not provide for it - even if a few church members are "unfaithful" in their giving.

For me, if church leadership needs to press the congregation for money, they are declaring they don't trust God, or that they are not working on His project....perhaps both.

Sadly the enforced "giving" issue has given Christians a very bad testimony. Many non-Christian's sincerely doubt the integrity of Christian organisations. Some of these may otherwise have been reached with the gospel.

Interestingly, the majority of the instructions Jesus gave the 12 He sent to announce the Kingdom, (and later the 72) had to do with the handling of finances. It looks like Jesus saw the mishandling of (or depending on) finances as the biggest threat to the preaching of the gospel.

PassingThru

Re: threat to the Gospel - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/8/29 19:20

Quote:

-----Jesus saw the mishandling of (or depending on) finances as the biggest threat to the preaching of the gospel.

What a loaded statement! So, it is not merely a case of wasting our money when we give indiscriminately, or even of building unnecessary buildings.

It is a case of damaging our faith - our most precious commodity - more precious than gold. And it is a case of violating God and his purposes.

I was deeply troubled by the earlier examples of spiritual manipulation within the church. Surely God is not blind to this. There will be consequences.

We can do our part by not enabling the problem through our passive compliance, and by seeking God and his ways with all our heart, soul and mind. If we are free from the praise and criticism of man, we will not be swayed so easily.

And, we can survive quite well without our church - even if we were excommunicated for "disobedience". We don't need to feel like God is going to punish us if we don't comply with the leaders' wishes.

Diane

Re: - posted by GaryE (), on: 2005/8/29 20:16

I know first hand of a ministry that takes an offering after almost every service. It has been said at this place that you should always give the people a chance to be blessed by giving them a chance to give to the Lord. Often the offerings are very small.

This same ministry buys bus tickets for people who are stranded. It also buys meals and sometimes motel rooms for hitchhikers and others who are in need, of which there are quite a few. Once, there was a stranded lady with a toddler and a new born baby. There were airplane tickets bought to get them all back to Minnesota from Pennsylvania. In doing all this often there is no money at hand. It flips me out watching this but the Lord always provides.

In saying all this, I believe that Jesus has fulfilled the law of tithe but I'm ever so glad to see someone give his or her tithe when this ministry is up against the wall.

It's only what is done for Christ that will last.

In Christ,
GaryE

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/8/29 20:34

Quote:

-----The Pastor even called people into his office to discuss their giving habits.

Quote:

-----Perhaps it is the church's responsibility to help YOU. I think that is a biblical principle...It is not wrong to be on the side of need.

I believe some pastors should reflect on the influence they have on the conscience of sincere Christians. Some pastors can wield their spiritual authority to make Christian men hesitant to provide for their own families or provide for neighbors in need because apparently the Kingdom needs new carpet.

It's uncanny. Some university should do a psychological study on this phenomenon.

MC

Thanks Gary for an encouraging testimony!

Re: links - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/8/29 20:44

Quote:

----- Some university should do a psychological study on this phenomenon.

I think it's been done:

(<http://www.geocities.com/hotsprings/3658/question.html>) Uncovering churches that abuse

(<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/a04.html>) Abusive Churches

(<http://www.spiritualabuse.org/introduction.html>) Spiritual Abuse

Does this help?

Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/8/29 20:58

Thanks Diane!

I wasn't expecting these. I'll take a gander.

MC

Re: yr "tithing dilemma pressures" - posted by jetman, on: 2005/8/30 11:18

Hi Doug, i am yr bro-in-Christ from Singapore. just chanced upon yr msg (first time i'm in this web forum). Felt i needed to join in and reply you. First of all, the Bible says "we" are the church of Jesus Christ, "we" are the body of Christ, of which Jesus is the Head. The church of Jesus Christ is therefore us, not a building, not some renovation carpets, etc. We as believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit in which He indwells, not a building. Some years ago my pastor had this same pressure of building the church cus we were only about 140. He went about 'socialising' and doing all he can and felt so depressed cus nothing works. Then God told him to just preach the Bible correctly and diligently and then God will do the rest. He did that in repentance and now 7 yrs later we are a 13,000 strong church. What you hear from yr pastor affects yr growth in the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit about what yr pastor is feeding you.

I noted that he went about 'having meetings' with u members about the area of tithing and change of giving patterns. But my question is : does he do the same about the problems his church members face, helping them solve their problems? After all, the title pastor actually means shepherd in greek. A pastor first calling is to care for his sheep, not expecting his sheep to 'care for his building first'. This is my concern for you and I pray the Lord will speak to you and put upon you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ and rise up far above yr present circumstances. I would like to recommend Kenneth E. Hagin to you. His books are really good and hv been a great source of revelation to me. God bless, Brother! :-)

Re: - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2005/8/31 13:54

For anyone that has been following this thread, we have asked to be released from our membership oath/commitment to the church. The pastor released me from my commitment to tithe to this church...

So, we are no longer members at this church, but as I was telling my wife, "We are still saved, Christians and part of THE church... and that at midnight we will not turn into pumpkins because we are not members anymore."

What a journey I have been on but it is good to start a new journey here...

General Topics :: "enforced" tithing?

In Christ,
Doug Renz

Re:, on: 2005/8/31 14:00

Doug... when we left the traditional church we had a lot of nervous fears... but it was liberating beyond anything we thought possible. Jesus was right when He said the truth would set us free.

Praise God for you and your wife.

Krispy

Re: Blessings to you - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/8/31 14:46

Quote:

-----So, we are no longer members at this church, but as I was telling my wife, "We are still saved, Christians and part of THE church..."

I am both happy and sad with the news. I rejoice over your honesty with your pastor, and your willingness to sacrifice your membership for the sake of integrity. There is loss in this (approval of man, sense of belonging, privileges to teach and lead, etc), but there is much more to gain. And I am joyful for you because of what's ahead spiritually. God will not abandon his own, he fellowships with them and brings believers together in his own ways.

On the other hand, I am sad that upholding "the rules" was more important to the pastor than preserving your membership. What a loss to the church!

I wonder if your pastor "got it", if he felt deep conviction through the loss of your membership. I wonder if he will make measures to reverse the error. For doing things God's way would bring far greater blessing to the church than any tithe ever could.

Diane

Re: - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2005/8/31 15:05

Here is how the conversation went with my pastor.

He started by saying that he and the board/elders/deacons looked at the members giving habits and due to budget reasons they needed to plan and trust the members that they would give based on their commitment to their membership agreement. Then he said, you have give since Jan, ---\$ amount and he said, "Is this a tithe?", and I replied, "What are you asking me?" (I really think he was afraid to ask the question, Are you tithing?) , and then he said, ok, I have to drill down, Are you tithing? and I said, "no", and he said, "why?"...

I said (after a deacon asked me about my giving 5 months ago) that I was in a place of need and having to borrow money to place food on the table, etc. And then I told him that I spoke to another pastor who is on staff a few weeks ago that I was not tithing and the other pastor didn't confront me on it. So it was a sign of approval to not tithe as a member... and I also told him that I spoke to the pastor about 7 months ago that we have a financial need, but because of work that needs to be done, they took the ALMS fund and gave it to a single guy who was out of work and needed the finances since we were working on the new church building.

I am not too worried about the loss of privileges in this church, because I know that God is working in my life and will lead me to the places He can use me in ministry. I am trusting Him. Loss of fellowship? That is their loss. I am saved and God is still able to use me, amen?

The church has an exclusive men's group that is only open to members and so I am automatically out of that group to fellowship with the men in the men's ministry which is fine to me. This gives me more opportunity to minister to my family and

d also some Sat morning evangelism at a local farm market.

My pastor didn't emotionally blink when he knew we were not going to be members, it was very 'matter of fact, and his job as he told me to ask me about the tithing issue'.

I am trusting Him in all of this and looking to see the true brothers and sisters in Christ who see Koininia with us over the legalistic membership requirements.

In Christ,
Doug