

What does it mean to be a good financial steward? What is God asking you to give back? These are the questions a steward asks.

The concept of tithing 10% is well established in the Old Testament. It came to represent the giving of the first fruits of everything God has blessed us with. It was offered to God and for the support of His work on earth. It was seen as a sign of righteousness (Just action) of the covenant people. Today most of us work for a wage or salary. In the United States a 40-hour workweek, 8 hours 5 days a week, is considered normal. I will keep it simple and base this consideration of tithing on a 40 hour work week starting with giving at the level of 10% and work back to help bring some focus on our current giving. The results may surprise you!

Today's **Minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour** 10 % of a 40-hour workweek is 4 hours. The chart below shows us what different levels of weekly stewardship would require. Minimum wage giving is in **Bold**. Annual Salary data is also provided for easy comparison.

Weekly: Stewardship based on 10% of earned income. [Assumes a 40 hour work week]

Hourly wage	Annual Income	4 hrs (10%)	2hrs (5%)	1hr (2.5%)	12 min (.5%)
4.81	10,000	19.24	9.62	4.81	.96
5.15*	10,712	20.60	10.30	5.15	1.03
7.50	15,600	30.00	15.00	7.50	1.50
10.00	20,800	40.00	20.00	10.00	2.00
12.50	26,000	50.00	25.00	12.50	2.50
15.00	31,200	60.00	30.00	15.00	3.00
17.50	36,400	70.00	35.00	17.50	3.50
25.00	52,000	100.00	50.00	25.00	5.00
50.00	104,000	200.00	100.00	50.00	10.00
57.69	120,000	230.77	115.38	57.70	11.54
481.00	1,000,000	1,924.00	962.00	481.00	96.00

Amount of time necessary to tithe at 10%, 5%, 2.5%, and .5%:

Minutes per each day of work	48 mins.	24 mins.	12 mins.	2 min. 24 sec.
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Yes, this means 10% equates to giving the first 48 minutes of each workday to God.

Of course God has gifted us 24 hours each day ... If we look at it that way and acknowledge the rest of the day as a gift from God at the same value as our workday, a 10% tithe means God asks us to give 2 mins. of each day to building up his Kingdom; at 5% - 1 min a day; 2.5 % - 12 seconds each day; at .5% one half of a second per day. Now if this does not make you pause and pray I don't know what will.

Minutes per day based on 24 hour day	2 mins.	1 mins.	12 seconds	½ second
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In Review: How to read the chart:

If you make \$10,712 a year or \$5.15 per hour (the minimum wage) 4 hours or 10% would mean \$20.60 a week in the offertory. You have given 48 minutes of each of your 5 workdays to God. If you value the rest of your day as much as work, God has asked you for the value of 2 minutes of every working day as a gift to complete His work.

If you make \$31,200 a year or \$ 15.00 per hour 4 hours or 10% would mean \$60 a week in the offertory. You have given 48 minutes of your workday to God. If you value the rest of your day as much as work, God has asked you for the value of 2 minutes of every working day as a gift to complete His work.

If you make \$104,000 a year or \$50 per hour 4 hours or 10% would mean \$200 a week in the offertory. You have given 48 minutes of your workday to God. If you value the rest of your day as much as work, God has asked you for the value of 2 minutes of every working day as a gift to complete His work.

Stewardship is about giving back to God what he has blessed you with. We are all called to be stewards. Not equal giving ... but according to our gifts. God has given us everything – what should we give back?

If you have been a good steward God has already blessed you and our parish. If you have given 10 or more percent, God will reward you. Not everyone will be able to give 10%, I suggest you start out at 5% and strive for 10%, that decision is between you and God. I do know we all have to start somewhere

As pastor and your spiritual advisor, I am asking only three things in the way of faithful financial stewardship: First, and most important, is to take this information under the prayerful guidance of the Holy Spirit and ask for the wisdom and courage to be a good steward. If you are married make sure you enter into this prayerful dialogue with your spouse. Secondly, join me in committing to prayerful, planned giving, I think you will agree that our electronic giving program is the best way to carry out your prayerful intention. Third, make a commitment to re-examine stewardship at least once a year giving God thanks for the grace to be a good and faithful steward.

Our parish and our individual lives will be transformed by this prayerful, planned giving as we strive to live out our calling as Disciples of Christ. As long as I am your pastor, this is the message I will challenge you to hear and respond to, it is the message of the scriptures and is consistent with the precepts of the Church “To provide for the needs (mission) of the Church in accordance with one’s means.”

In Christ – United in faith, love and service

Fr. Mike

His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25:23)