

# What We Gain From Giving

**Introduction.** Many people have said in one way or another, “Freewill offerings are not God’s way of raising money; they’re one of His ways of raising children.” It is similar to Him putting Adam in Eden “to cultivate it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15). God did not need a gardener, but Adam needed an occupation. Likewise, God does not need our money, but we need to contribute. Why do we need to give monetarily to a local congregation?

The typical response to this question is, “So that the work of the church can continue,” or, “To help spread the gospel.” While both statements are true to some degree, they do not actually answer the question asked. The question was not, “Why does the local church need money?” It was, “Why do we need to give monetarily to a local church?” The former emphasizes the objective need of the congregation, while the latter considers the subjective need of the contributor. So, what is the answer? There are actually three great answers.

## ***I. We Learn About The Importance Of Spiritual Priorities***

- A. In Matthew 6:25-33 Jesus taught a great lesson that is easy to understand, but difficult to live. The basic principle is stated earlier in the text (vv. 19-21; cp. Matthew 19:16-22).
- B. We need to learn what is really important in life. All too often, material possessions take precedence in our minds, hearts, and activities (cp. Luke 9:62; 14:26; 20:25). But Jesus promises that if we will seek His kingdom first rather than attempting to build one of our own, “and His righteousness” rather than attempting to define one of our own from material thoughts and desires, that the necessities of life “shall be added to you” (v. 25).
- C. Giving monetarily to a local congregation of the Lord’s church helps us learn to value spiritual over material possessions, and to use our material blessings for spiritual rewards rather than the other way around (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

## ***II. We Learn About Stewardship And Our Relationship To God***

- A. The concept of stewardship is a little foreign to us, at least by that name. It is being put in charge of another’s possessions, and thus being responsible for using them in way to promote the owner’s interests and gains. In reality, it is not all that different from being in a management position with a company. The promotion and furtherance of the company’s interest are made paramount, and from the service rendered, the steward receives his living and commensurate reward (cp. Matthew 24:45-51).
- B. How does this work in spiritual terms? We have to understand that all blessings — whether spiritual or physical, are the provision of God (cp. Acts 14:15-17; James 1:17). Both in reality and effect, everything belongs to God as Creator and Sustainer of everything (Psalm 24:1; 50:10-11; 1 Chronicles 29:11. Nothing really “belongs” to any of us. We are “stewards” of His possessions.
- C. Giving monetarily to a local congregation of the Lord’s church is simply using those possessions of our benevolent Benefactor in a way that promotes His interests and furthers His cause — and that helps make us good and faithful

stewards (1 Corinthians 4:1-2) and that allows God to continue to bless us (Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:10-11).

### ***III. We Learn About Fellowship And Our Relationship To Brethren***

- A. There are a lot of well-meaning Christians who genuinely want to be in and feel true “fellowship” with a local congregation. Sadly, many of them attend services only once or twice a month because they’re “so busy,” and never really contribute anything — monetarily or otherwise — because they have “so many bills” and “so little time.” If you are one of those people or families, let’s read Acts 2:43-47.
  - 1. The true sense of belonging and oneness (v. 44a) of mind (v. 46a), heart (v. 46b), and provision (v. 45) is, I believe, directly traceable and proportionate to their willingness to be involved in and committed to their local congregation.
  - 2. They “continually devoted themselves” to worship (v. 42). They studied and learned together “day by day” (v. 46a). They were invested in one another’s welfare physically (vv. 44-45) and spiritually (v. 47). And, they had or made time for one another apart from their assemblies (v. 46b).
- B. Obviously, the oneness and fellowship they enjoyed was not achieved from being “too busy” or having “too many bills” to be truly involved in their local congregation. It was ultimately achieved by being willing to first give “themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
  - 1. To have the sense of belonging we have to first belong; and to have a true sense of fellowship we must first be in the ship.
  - 2. But beyond this, we must also be willing to grab an oar and start rowing by doing our part (cp. 1 Chronicles 29:3-9).
- C. Giving monetarily to a local congregation of the Lord’s church is definitely not all there is to experiencing true fellowship, but it does teach us much about self-sacrifice and being joint-participants — which is the literal definition of fellowship (cp. 1 Corinthians 9:23).

**Conclusion.** I have never found a single expectation of God for us with which complete compliance is not in our best interest. They are not just to allow us to avoid Hell and enjoy Heaven eternally. They are to help teach and mature us into better people, spouses, parents, children, employees, employers, neighbors, citizens, and brethren in the Lord. God does not need the money you give to your local congregation, but you need to give it in order to enjoy all the blessings and benefits associated with being in fellowship with Him and His people.