

Dear Members and Attendees of Hopewell Christian Fellowship,

The Elders of Hopewell have some important financial information to share with you. Hopewell is not immune from the financial pressures gripping the nation, but we can prayerfully plan for the upcoming year with wisdom and faith. The budget on the reverse side of this letter represents where we feel led to invest the resources God has entrusted to us as we seek to advance His kingdom. Far from being mere numbers and line items, our budget for September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012 is a fiscal representation of our mission—to reach as many people as possible in our community for Christ. Please look it over and pray for the ministries and people represented there.

Unfortunately, as we approach the new fiscal year, decreased giving over the past few months has resulted in a deficit of over \$20,000. Despite deep and comprehensive cuts in spending over the last two years, we may need to consider more drastic measures, such as laying-off pastoral staff.

Though we don't know who gives what, we do know that a relatively small number of us (less than 20%) give regularly to the church; this includes individuals and families who tithe, giving 10% of their income. (If we're referring to you, THANK YOU!) But the hard reality is, **about 80% of us are not financially supporting the church**. Can you imagine what would happen if just another 20% began to give regularly or tithe?

As Elders, we want Hopewell to be a community where we honor God with our finances, knowing that generous giving is part of our worship and expands our capacity for ministry. A good example of this is found in 2 Corinthians 8-9, where Paul commended the church in Corinth for generous giving despite its own financial hardships.

More regular and committed givers would make a significant difference in the extent of our reach with the gospel. **Would you prayerfully consider either beginning to give regularly or beginning the biblical practice of tithing (see enclosed)?** Again, we recognize that this kind of request is never popular, but your response will make a huge difference in what we do, particularly over the next few months.

Despite present and future challenges, we look forward to the upcoming fiscal year as one in which God will continue to be active in our lives and in the lives of those He wants us to reach. Please feel free to contact Chris McNamara, our Executive Administrator or me with any questions.

On behalf of the Elder team,



Andy Horvath
Lead Elder

Hopewell Christian Fellowship

2011-2012 BUDGET

Small Groups	1,500.00
Biblical Counseling	650.00
Adults	6,900.00
Youth	14,000.00
Preteens	2,200.00
Children	15,400.00
Worship	8,500.00
Misc. Ministry (communion, baptism, etc)	2,900.00
Special Events	3,150.00
Missions/Outreach	54,311.00
Connect & Care (First Touch/Benevolence)	5,600.00
Repair & Maintenance (Building & Grounds)	29,700.00
General Operations	94,784.00
Office Expenses	42,570.00
Payroll	241,040.00
Housing Allowance	124,942.00
Staff Expenses	<u>75,162.00</u>
Total	<u><u>723,309.00</u></u>

The Bible and Giving

Q: Is charitable giving the same as tithing?

A: Not Necessarily

While charitable giving is noble and necessary, it's not the same as tithing. The difference is that a tithe, or 10% of a person's income, is to be set aside specifically for God's work. It's not ours to spend as we choose. It's something God has established to finance His vision of reaching people through local churches like Hopewell.

Q: Does God expect Christians to tithe?

A: Yes

In **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**, the Apostle Paul is teaching believers in Corinth about giving. He begins by saying this...

"Now about the collection (or contribution) for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made (or so I don't have to beg you to give). Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me."

The Apostle Paul identifies three aspects of giving: *Planned, Personal and Proportional* giving.

First, Giving is *Planned*.

Paul said, "**On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money.**"

Planned giving is the opposite of impulsive or emotional giving, which can lead to financial hardship. Planned giving is deciding beforehand how much a person will (not can) give.

Second, Giving is *Personal*.

Paul said that "**each one of you should give.**"

Personal giving means that each person is to give. No exceptions.

Third, Giving is *Proportional*.

Paul said everyone “**should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.**” This is where tithing comes in, because tithing, which represents 10% of our income, is an example of proportional giving.

Though tithing is an Old Testament command—**see Malachi 3:8-12**—it’s a baseline of giving in the New Testament and for today. Therefore, tithing is something every follower of Christ should practice.

Q: Does God expect every Christian to tithe?

A: Yes and No

Though every follower of Christ is to tithe, God expects some to give above and beyond 10% because He has gifted and resourced them accordingly.

Q: What should I do if I have the spiritual gift of giving?

A: Give above and beyond your tithe as God leads you to give.

If we were to say that everyone should just tithe, we are in essence letting some people off the hook, or not encouraging them to exercise their spiritual gift of giving which the Apostle Paul talks about in **Romans 12:6-8**.

A good biblical definition of the spiritual gift of giving is: the ability to freely, cheerfully, and generously give of one’s possessions to resource God’s work.

It has been said that the spiritual gift of giving has less to do with the size of a person’s bank account, and more to do with the size of a person’s heart and faith.

Resources

The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn

The Blessed Life by Robert Morris