

Local Church

Principles of Faithfulness

1 Timothy 5:18 — “The labourer is worthy of his wages.”

The Word of God not only teaches us how to give but also the right way to do it! There is a revealed truth not only about how we should return tithes and give offerings but also about what should and should not be done with these expressions of faithfulness.

It is not just what we do. What really matters is how we do it because the way we do it shows our obedience to the clear principles of God’s Word. The Bible presents several guidelines on the correct way to exercise faithfulness. A frequently asked question about the use of tithing resources is, “If tithing is a sacred resource, could it not be used for sacred works such as charity or church building/renovations?”

The principles of tithe allocation were revealed to Moses, and they are displayed throughout the Pentateuch. In the book of Numbers we read: “Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting” (Numbers 18:21). The Levites were paid with the resources provided by tithes. The purpose of the Levites’ wages was to allow them to fully devote their time to religious work.

Paul reaffirms this principle: “Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13, 14).

Ellen G. White corroborates the same principle with the following statement:

A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord’s arrangement. God will judge for these things” *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p, 248

This is not to say that we should not help those in need or invest in building new temples or renovating old ones. We are advised that these actions should not be done with tithing resources. This is a clear and sure principle. We may not agree, but we can never say that there is not a clear “Thus saith the Lord” on this matter.

Appeal: Are you willing to live by the principles presented in God’s Word regarding the use of tithes and offerings? May the Lord bless you as you commit to being a faithful giver.