



# STEWARDSHIP

A Biblical Perspective on Giving

A steward is a person who has been entrusted with another's resources and who seeks to manage those resources according to the owner's vision and values. The gospel calls us to recognize that everything we have is a gift from God — and that those gifts are to be used for his glory and to further his kingdom. Scripture even calls Christians caretakers of God's gifts and truth (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 4:1).<sup>1</sup>

We at Real Hope recognize that in addition to acting as responsible stewards of our talents and skills, we must also be stewards of our possessions and finances. We are called to counter-cultural generosity.

## What is generosity?

Generosity is the natural, consistent, and occasionally spontaneous giving of our material possessions to God's service and to our communities because of and modeled after what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross. As God *did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all* (Romans 8:32), so our posture toward God and others in response to his love should be one of cheerful sacrifice and generosity.

## What is the biblical basis for the tithe? (i.e. giving 10% of our income to God)

In the Old Testament, believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor.<sup>2</sup> This gives us a sense of God's perspective on generosity. The New Testament teaches that we should give as we *are able and even beyond [our] ability* (2 Corinthians 8:3). Therefore, the tithe (10%) is seen as a kind of minimum guideline for giving.

## What if I am unable to give 10% right now?

For some people, 10% is too low a starting point. For others, giving even 5% is a sacrifice. There are seasons in our financial life, but the goal is to increase one's commitment up to and above 10% as soon as possible, so that it models Christ's love to our communities.

## Should I give all of my tithe and offering to Real Hope Community Church?

Your gift is an act of personal worship in response to God's grace in your life and the gift of his Son, and the allocation of your money should be a byproduct of prayer. However, if you consider Real Hope your home church, you should consider allocating a significant portion of your tithe and offering to the community where you invest most of your time and where others are investing in you.

## Isn't there more to generosity and stewardship than money?

We are called to be good stewards of all that God has given us: money, time, skills, influence and position. Therefore, generosity and stewardship are about much more, but not less, than our financial resources. Jesus said, *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also* (Matthew 6:21). Our heart's inclination is to worship anything other than God. In a city like Houston, money can become an idol. Giving it away generously to God's service can liberate us from our idolatry and fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).

We desire for Real Hope to be a church with a generous heart. For that to be true, we must be generous as individuals and as an organization. To that end, we will give away at least 10% of our annual operating budget to help people locally and globally, praying that our organizational heart follows our treasure.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the language in this document has been borrowed and adapted from Redeemer Presbyterian Church

<sup>2</sup> Lev 27:30ff; Num 18:26; Deut 12:17; 14:23ff; 26:12; 2 Chr 31:5f; Neh 10:37; Mal 3:10