

Giving To God Monetarily
Pastor Jim Alblas
Pioneer Christian Reformed Church

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul touches on the importance of monetary giving. The Philippians had taken up a collection to support Paul and from his word of thanks we learn many things about this aspect of Christian living.

The first thing we learn is that giving is pleasing to God. (Phil 4:18) It's pleasing because it demonstrates our obedience to one of God's commands. Consider passages such as 2 Corinthians 9:6,7, and Proverbs 3:9 that call us to give cheerfully, generously and to honor God with our wealth. Anytime we are obedient to God's will, He is pleased. It's also pleasing to God because generous giving communicates our trust in Him. By letting go of a portion of something that many people place their trust in, we are trusting that God will take care of our needs.

Second, we learn that giving blesses other people. Paul was filled with great joy that the Philippians had supported him. (Phil 4:10) At the time, Paul was incarcerated, but receiving their offering made him feel loved and supported. There was a church in North Carolina, recently, that received an 18 cent donation in their collection basket with a note attached. The donor apologized for the size of his offering, but indicated it was all he had due to being homeless. That congregation was greatly warmed by his proportionate generosity. There are many other stories of people being blessed through others giving.

Third, we learn that when we give in this way, we are blessed. Paul was anticipating that God would reward the Philippians for their generosity. (Phil 4:17). While we don't give to receive, it is clear from scripture that that is a by-product of our giving. Acts 20:35, in particular, remind us that *it is more blessed to give than receive*.

How much should we give? I can't answer that for you; only that we are to give generously and with a cheerful attitude. Where should we give? I can't answer that for you either; only that we should give to support God's work.

The Philippians offering was intended to support Paul who was a Christian missionary. Today, God's work is a broad in scope. There is the local church that leads people to worship, serve, study and reach out to others. There are Christian missionaries who serve over seas and various Christian organizations and schools that do many good things for God. Even giving to charities that are not necessarily Faith-based can be God's work too. Donating to the American Cancer Society or Feeding America, for example, fulfil our call to not only minister in word, but in deed.

During this Lent season, we especially consider how much God has given to us; He sent His son, Jesus, to die upon a cross to pay for our sins! As God has generously given to us, let us also generously give to support His work.