

## **PASTORS AND CHURCH TITHES**

Matthew 10:10 ... "...for a worker is worthy of his food."

This is our third and final devotional about giving to the work of God. Today we discuss how your financial gifts to the church are to be used and your pastor's responsibilities in handling those gifts.

When Jesus sent out his disciples to preach on his behalf, he instructed them to go without money or possessions. They were to be blessed by the generosity of the people. It gave them an opportunity to support the work of the Lord by feeding and housing his disciples. In saying that "a worker is worthy of his food," Jesus was speaking of those who work for and serve God. If you work on a fishing boat, plant corn, or serve in an LGU office, you expect to be paid for your work. What about your pastor, who is responsible for work far more important than catching fish or harvesting bananas?

Pastors are entrusted with the responsibility to teach people about God. We are obligated to support them financially. However, some church members feel their pastor should work in the fields like themselves, or drive passengers around in a trike during the week, instead of living off their tithes. If you feel that your pastor should have a second job so he can buy his own food, then you are crippling the work of the church.

What about pastors who misuse church tithes? If your pastor and his family are living off church tithes but he is not fulfilling his pastoral obligations, he is ignoring Christ's teaching about stewardship. Being a genuine pastor is a fulltime job. Preparing sermons, leading Bible studies and prayer meetings, preaching and teaching, visiting the sick, guiding Sunday School teachers and the worship team, meeting with the elders or deacons, and counseling members will keep a pastor busy many hours every day. The word "worker" in today's verse is in the context of a servant of God; a person who devotes his (or her) life to serving God and making the spread of the gospel his most important task. But, if your pastor has to work at another job to feed himself and his family, he is unable to fulfill his pastoral duties.

The twelve disciples Jesus sent out to preach, gave up everything to serve him. They left their jobs, businesses, families, and friends to follow Christ and serve God. They endured hardship and persecution. Eventually, they were killed for their faith. If your pastor has been called by God to serve him in a church, and he is serving with integrity (meaning, he is not misusing church tithes) then he deserves to be supported by the church family. If he does misuse church tithes, the church elders are obligated to counsel him because stewardship of God's resources is a serious and sacred responsibility. But, the elders must themselves be pure of heart and good stewards before they counsel their pastor.

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