

Giving to St Mark's Camberwell

Why do Christians give money to their local Church?

There are a number of good reasons why Christians give money to their local Church.

1. Stewardship

Everything I own belongs to God and I am accountable to him for the way I use it. This is emphasised in Jesus stewardship parables (Mt 25:14-21; Lk 19:11-27), where the good steward of his master's wealth is commended, while the bad (stingy!) steward suffers judgment. We are to store up riches for ourselves in the Kingdom of Heaven instead of here on earth (Lk 6:24; 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 18:18-30). When Jesus speaks of this kind of stewardship, he has in mind our whole lives, not just our money. However, in this sense, it is true that our use of money can be an indicator of our wider spiritual condition.

2. As an expression of gratitude to God

Though he was infinitely 'rich', Jesus made himself poor so that we might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). Financial giving is often an expression of thanksgiving to God for salvation and material abundance in this life.

3. Our obligations to our church staff

Christians have an obligation to share all good things with those whose work it is to teach and preach. This has always been the practice of the Christian church, which found a precedent in the Old Testament temple system of priests and tithes (1Tim 5:17-18; 1Cor 9:3-14; Gal 6:6).

4. Compassion for the poor

Christians are to give generously to the poor as a demonstration of the grace God has bestowed upon us (2Cor 8-9; Proverbs 19:17; 22:9). This was the practice of Christians from the very beginning, first of all to those within the Christian community, and then to all people generally (Acts 4:32-37; Gal 6:10).

5. Strategic Gospel Partnerships

The wise steward will want to get the greatest gospel return for his or her investment. We share in the gospel work of others when we partner with them financially. Not of all us are evangelists, preachers, missionaries or youth workers: but we set them free to do the job to which God has called and equipped them when we commit to supporting them financially (Philippians 1:3-7; 4:10-20).

6. Fleeing from Greed

Christians also give in order to free themselves from the tyranny of greed—wealth can be a trap! (Ephesians 5:3-10, 1Timothy 6:3-10; James 1:10-11; 5:1-6)

Other obligations

Christian giving also occurs in the context of other financial obligations that we have to governments (Rom 13:1-17), to our families (1 Tim 5:3-16), to be prudent (Proverbs 6:6-11; 27:23-27) and to support ourselves (1Thes 4:11-12). Without ignoring these obligations, Christians are to be generous and free in their giving—for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7).

How much should I give?

The amount that you decide to give is a matter to be determined between you and God. In Old Testament times, giving towards the support of the temple system began at the level of 10% of gross income and then 'freewill', 'fellowship' and other offerings were added to that amount.

Although some Christians find this a useful guide, this principle of 'tithing' does not have any force in the New Testament. Christians are free to decide before God what they give—there is no obligation. Instead of such 'tithing' laws, Christians are instructed to give generously, systematically and in proportion to what one has (see 2 Cor 8:1-12). So having prayerfully determined what you will give, stick to it and rejoice that you are able to share in this work.

What is the money used for?

Money given to St. Mark's is used in three main ways: (i) growing the ministry of our church locally by providing staff, ministry resources and support functions; (ii) investing in buildings and equipment that effectively serve ministry functions—both for current maintenance as well as future development; and (iii) partnership with other individuals and organizations engaged in strategic gospel and compassion ministries.

For example, in 2008 our church continued its financial support of Ridley Melbourne Theological College, the Church Missionary Society, along with a number of other smaller organisations, such as Prison Network Ministries.

How can I give at St Mark's?

There are several ways you can prayerfully consider giving to St Mark's:

Electronic Giving

We recommend Internet banking as the preferred means of giving for our regular members. It is efficient, systematic and regular. This is as much an aid to you as to St. Mark's. Any giving done by electronic banking remains anonymous. For direct deposit, periodic payment or electronic funds transfers, please ask us for our brochure (office@stmarkscamberwell.org.au, or phone 9882 3776).

Cash

This method remains the most common way of giving at St. Mark's. During the offertory song, place your gift in the offertory bowls as they are passed around. Envelopes are also available for anonymity and to aid with regular giving.

Credit Card

While it is possible to use your credit card to give to St. Mark's, we don't strongly recommend this method – because we don't want you to be over-run with credit card debt, a heavy burden so many Australians face today. Please therefore carefully consider an alternate method of giving before signing up to this method – a process which occurs through the Anglican Development Fund.

The Anglican Development fund process means you can nominate your credit card number, or a bank account which can also be debited directly. The ADF form is found [here](#). Download and post to ADF.

Bequests

This is way of making a gospel impact from heaven! Bequests are made through your Will and would normally be arranged for you by your legal advisor. You may make St Mark's the beneficiary of cash, securities, and/or other property. You may designate specific amounts or a percentage of your estate, or you may make St Marks a residual beneficiary of your estate, that is, a recipient of some part of the balance after payment of specific bequests, expenses, and taxes. An unencumbered bequest is the most flexible way to benefit the future generations of our church.