

**INTRO:** Today, I'm preaching on "Your Best Place For Blessing". You here me use that phrase a lot. But do you really understand what I'm saying? Listen to me for a moment, YOU HAVE A BEST PLACE FOR BLESSING that you can live in. It's a place that obligates God the Father, by His own promises, to move into your circumstances, and to move Heaven and earth, if necessary, to meet your needs. There is a place like that.

Okay, when you hear me say that, your next thought should be, WHERE IS THAT PLACE? That's what I want to talk about today. Notice, to be in your best place for blessing, you first must be...

**I) FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS CHURCH:** Bible study, prayer and small groups are great but they won't bolster you to full maturity without adding church into the mix. God designed church to be an irreplaceable catalyst of growth for every Christian. When you skip church, you miss out on some of the spiritual gains (blessings) God has planned for your life. **ILLUS:** How many of you have ever had a membership to a gym you hardly ever used? Everything you needed to get get physically fit, strong, pumped, and swoll was there for you in that gym. But it never happened for you because you didn't go!

Spiritual growth that comes from faithful committed church attendance is far more needful in your life than what you get at the gym!

Now, in all honesty, the Bible doesn't tell us how many times per month we should go to church. But thankfully, God does gives us several clear descriptions of what it looks like to be a healthy, committed member of a church.

**A) We should attend church often enough to show we deeply care about it:**

**Hebrews 10:24-25** *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."*

When this verse says, "not neglecting to meet together..." What does it mean? It means to *not fail* in our responsibility to *properly care* for the church. The opposite of neglecting is to CARE FOR. If someone neglects meeting together with their church, they're not caring for the church the way God desires for them to do so. At that point, they're caring for something else, whatever that is, that has taken them away from their church, be it hobbies, scheduling conflicts or a date with their pillow. Scripture is clear: Some are in the habit of doing this, but you shouldn't be one of them!

Think of it this way: Church attendance should be the norm and missing church should be the exception, and not the other way around.

**B) We should attend church persistently and with perseverance:** **Acts 2:42** *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer"* The early church as described in Acts was full of radical growth, outrageous miracles, and genuine joy-filled relationships. Acts 2:42 uses an interesting word to describe the believers in that church. They were devoted. This word in the Greek is a strong word which means, "to persist in; to be intently engaged in; or to attend constantly to". Does that describe your attitude toward your church and church attendance?

## I) FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS CHURCH:

### C) We should attend church like our role in it is vital to its growth and health:

**Ephesians 4:11-16** "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

The Bible frequently refers to the church as the body of Christ and to its members as individual parts of the body. And like the various organs, muscles, and parts of a body that cannot function without each other, God created us to be interdependent and interconnected. No person can choose to live independently from the rest of the body of Christ without causing harm to themselves and to the rest of the church.

**ILLUS:** At this point, I'm two weeks past shoulder surgery. And it would be hard to describe to you the pain my missing shoulder, so to speak, has caused me this week. There's been times I've wanted to cry! Do you know how hard it is to get my hair looking this good while not being able to use my right arm? The whole body working together is essential to health and vitality.

You need the people of the church and the people of the church need you. The church needs you to show up on Sunday, tired as you may feel and disheveled as you may appear. The woman in the seat next to you needs you to shake her hand and say, "I'm glad you're here." The new family visiting needs you to serve in the kids' ministry so they can hear the gospel in the service. Just as the church's role in your life is irreplaceable, so is your role in the church.

Listen to what the Word of God says about the church...

**Psalm 122:1** "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

**1 Timothy 3:14-15** "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

**Psalm 84:4** "Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!"

SO, Your best place of blessing is when your I) Fully Committed To His Church and...

## II) FAITHFULLY GIVING TO HIS WORK:

In the same way that there is a blessing pronounced on those who attend the house of God, there is also a blessing reserved for those who give faithfully to the work of God.

There are two questions that people almost always ask, if they are sincere in giving at all. How much am I suppose to give? And do I give on my gross or net income?

## I) FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS CHURCH:

### II) FAITHFULLY GIVING TO HIS WORK: Well, let's look to God's Word for the answers.

**A) What do I tithe on?:** Proverbs 3:9-10 *"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;(income) 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."*(Lack for nothing)

Firstfruits is a unique term for us today. There's not many farmers among us. The word translated firstfruits is the Hebrew word, *reshith* (ray-sheeth'). It literally means first, first-fruit, choicest, finest, and foremost.

The idea behind this word is that nothing comes before God. God is to be supreme in our lives. He gets our best and our first. SO, from this we would rightly conclude that in our economy God would receive that which is first or best of our income, the GROSS amount.

If we paid tithes on our net income, we couldn't say that God was getting our firstfruits, because the government would be. There are those in government that think they're God, but they're not.

2 Chronicles 31:4-5 *"He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. 5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything."*

**B) How much do I tithe?:** This is the second question sincere people want to know. The Hebrew word translated tithe is *ma'aser*; And the Greek word is *dekate*. Both mean a tenth. Now understand, according to scripture this was the starting point at which people gave to the Lord and His mission.

Genesis 14:19-20 *"and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."*

The Bible mentions tithing all throughout the OT, But is it a NT teaching?

Matthew 23:23 *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."*

Giving is a heart issue. If we have a right heart toward God, giving becomes easy.

Matthew 6:21 *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

This verse teaches us that it's easy to tell where someone's heart and allegiance lies. Just look at where they spend their money.

## I) FULLY COMMITTED TO HIS CHURCH:

**II) FAITHFULLY GIVING TO HIS WORK:** I love this passage that speaks to the heart of giving... **Mark 12:41-44** “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Then there's the blessings and curse promised to those who give and those who don't.

**Malachi 3:8-12** “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.”

**Haggai 1: 3-6** “Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: 4 “Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? 5 This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Look at what's happening to you! 6 You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!”

The argument most give concerning tithing is, I can't afford to. I can't pay my bills as it is. But the Bible says you can't pay your bills because you don't tithe. Because you don't put God first.

According to Church development, 2018, Only about 5% of churchgoers tithe.

According to a study called, State of the Plate, 2013, Tithers are 40% less likely to owe significant debt.

Now you may be tempted to say, well if I had 40% less debt I'd tithe too. But tithers are quick to respond to that. Most tithers attribute their financial security to the Lord and the fact that He honors their giving.

Pew Research states, Consistent giving fosters a deeper understanding of stewardship. It encourages Christians to become intentional and thoughtful about their resources and ultimately impacts their financial health across the board.

When Christians decide to become serious about their giving, they often find that they are more responsible with 90% than they ever were with 100%. Statistics show that tithers are half as likely (20% vs. 40%) to be overdue on credit card payments and 28% of all tithers are debt free.

**THERE IS A BEST PLACE FOR BLESSING! ARE YOU IN IT?**