

## **IMPROVING WORSHIP #5: Giving**

A few years ago, some brethren claimed that our Scriptural obligation to contribute of our means on the Lord's day is not an act of worship. This article is not intended to exhaustively cover all that the New Testament teaches on this important subject, but to answer the false position that giving is not worship and to mention a few things that we can do to enhance this part of the Lord's Day worship service.

It is preposterous on the face of it to suggest that giving is not an act of worship. Why? Because the giving of our means back to God is an expression of our reverence, awe, and thanksgiving for what He has given us. He has given us every temporal blessing we have to enjoy (Jam. 1:17). He has also given us the greatest gift it was possible for Him to give; His son to die on the cross that we might have the remission of sins and eternal life (John 3:16). When we realize these facts, we will recognize that giving back to God is not only an act of worship, but is a most significant one.

The things we can do to improve this aspect of our worship may not be as many in number as some of the other acts of worship, but they are just as important. In the first place, since after observance of the Lord's Supper is a convenient time to take up the offering, it is good to remind ourselves that it is not a part of the Lord's Supper. Although it might not be advisable in larger congregations, I have seen the practice in some of the smaller ones of taking up the collection at a different time. In some ways, that improved the partaking of the Lord's Supper as well as the offering, because it helped members place separate significance on both. It is not a bad idea.

As with the Lord's Supper, it is not a bad idea to remind the members that when they give they are not just complying with a command that God has given, but are expressing their love to Him for His bounty, and for the provisions made for our salvation. Such remarks do not have to be long, but a few words may be helpful.

Our giving, of course, is to be purposed. That is, we are to plan the amount we are going to give. We need to prepare beyond just the purposing, though. If one gives by check, he needs to have it made out before hand. It is embarrassing, distracting, and interfering with proper observance of the Lord's Supper for one to make out his check, while the fruit-of-the-vine is being served to the congregation. Whether one gives by check or by cash, as some do, he needs to have his contribution in a place that reaching for it can be done swiftly and without distracting anyone.

I have heard some people say that if a person gets paid monthly he must give his entire month's contribution on the Sunday after he has been paid. The argument is that the person only profited that one week, and that it would be wrong to spread it out over the weeks when he had no profiting. May we remind those who attempt to make such a law, that the instruction in 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2 also says upon the first day of the week, meaning each first day. My point is that just because a person gets paid once a month does not mean he has only profited one week during that month. His paycheck represents his profit that would otherwise be spread out over the entire month if he got paid by the week. Given the totality of all the scripture says, no one has

the right to legislate for another member either way. Let each person make up his own mind about it in such situations. Both ways have Scripture arguments that can be made, thus it doesn't matter. My sense is that most people would rather spread the contribution out, and personally, I understand that practice.

Have you ever noticed that after some people drop their contribution in the collection plate, they grab a songbook, fidget around, and make unnecessary noise? Remember, this part of the worship is still ongoing. Throughout the entire worship service we should all maintain respect and reverence for God.

Giving of our means is an act of worship toward God, and when we recognize it as such, it deserves any changes we can make to improve it, and every bit as much respect and devotion as the other four acts of worship.

**© 2009, Charles Dale Pogue**

**Permissions Granted:**

You may print, copy, distribute, and publish this article free of charge so long as the article is unchanged and is credited.