

## About Spiritual Practices ~ What is Tithing?

From the Episcopal Network for Stewardship: <http://www.tens.org/resources/blog/the-transformational-journey-of-giving>

The Transformational Journey of Giving

By [BRUCE ROCKWELL](#)

Many years ago when I was still early in my journey of stewardship formation work and was preparing to offer a lay homily at a parish where a friend of mine belonged, my friend called me up and said he understood that I was preaching that Sunday. I acknowledged that he was correct. He then went on: "I suppose you will tell us to tithe and, if you do, no one will listen to you unless you tell us the benefits. I read a book once that told about a man who decided to tithe, and his business flourished so that his income increased tenfold or more. And I assume that is your experience as well, or something like that, so, Bruce, if you are going to tell us to tithe, you had better tell us what the benefits are."

### The Benefits of Giving

When he had finished this long monologue, I was speechless. After a moment, in which I tried to collect my thoughts, I said, "Well, that is not my experience. My income has not increased since I decided to tithe."

To which he said, "Well you had better tell us what the benefits will be or no one will listen to you."

Well, he gave me a gift, because he prompted me to think about the benefits of tithing, or of being an intentional, proportionate giver. So what I said that following Sunday was that there were indeed benefits to embarking on a journey of proportionate giving leading toward tithing.

*From my experience, I said, the benefits are NOT material benefits - they are impossible to measure in finite terms and are difficult to even describe. However, the benefits are the most significant I can imagine.*

### Intentional Giving has Transformed My Life

The benefits are spiritual benefits. Embarking on a journey of intentional proportionate giving has transformed my life. I have realized and have experienced, for the first time in my life, the incredible gift of God's grace. By striving to make offerings to God that begin to represent my thanksgiving to God, I have experienced the love of God in powerful new ways. I know something about God that I had not known before. God loves me so much that God forgives me again and again and again when I fall short of the mark. God continues to shower God's love, generosity, and forgiveness on me. Each day, God wakes me up sound of body, mind and spirit, and says, "Bruce, here is a new day, a new opportunity to strive to be a good steward of all the gifts I am entrusting to you. See what kind of a steward you can be of the gift of this new day. Strive to be more loving, more forgiving, more generous. Strive to grow more and more into the person I have created you to be."

## **A Life-Changing & Life-Transforming Gift**

What a life-changing, life-transforming gift this was and continues to be. I am convinced that when we strive to make sacrificial, loving, thankful offerings to God, we are drawn into a new, more intimate relationship with God. And that relationship is, from my experience, the benefit of tithing. And, if you don't feel called to, or ready to tithe yet, if you will become an intentional proportionate giver, out of your belief that everything you have is a gift from God, you will begin to experience these wonderful spiritual benefits.

## **Tell Your Story**

You may be asking why I related this incident. It is to encourage you to tell your story. Don't be shy about telling your story. When people of faith share their faith story with another, they are giving the most precious gift one person of faith can offer another.

Your story is precious, and, from my experience, telling your story just may plant seeds of conversion in the heart and mind of another.