

D&C#17 The Law of Tithing and the Law of the Fast

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I. Introduction

- a. The Law of Tithing

Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little state,

"The history of ancient Israel, as given in the Old Testament, evidences that the law of tithing was in force from Abraham until their destruction as a nation. That it was a perpetual law of the Priesthood, and did not pertain, exclusively, to the Mosaic dispensation, is apparent, from the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20), and that Jacob covenanted to give a tenth to the Lord (Gen. 28:22). They lived before Moses." (*A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel*. Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1914, [Revised Edition, Reprint], 146).

Following a battle with the kings of the area in which Lot was taken captive, Abram, whose name would later be changed by the Lord to Abraham, Lot's Uncle, took men and pursued them. He was able to defeat the kings in battle. He brought

back Lot and all the goods and people that had been taken. Abram refused any reward from the king of Sodom who offered him the retrieved goods, but he did meet with Melchizedek who was the king of Salem.

<p>Genesis 14:18-20</p> <p>18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.</p> <p>19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:</p> <p>20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.</p>	<p>JST, Genesis 14:17-20</p> <p>17 And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he break bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the most high God.</p> <p>18 And he gave to Abram, and he blessed him, and said, Blessed Abram, thou art a man of the most high God, possessor of heaven and of earth;</p> <p>19 And blessed is the name of the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hands.</p> <p>20 And Abram gave him tithe of all he had taken.</p>
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LDS Dictionary states,

“Tithe. The word denotes a tenth part, given [by the individual] for the services of God.” (LDS Bible Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 785).

As noted, this is the first record we have in ancient scripture of the payment of a tithe given directly to God’s appointed servant. It is understood that Abram had accepted God’s law of the tithe and was making payment to His priesthood leader, Melchizedek.

We learn that Jacob will receive the blessing of Abraham that had been given to Isaac his father, rather than Esau.

Genesis 28:3-4, 20-22

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; than thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gavn unto Abraham.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give a [JST: the] tenth unto thee.

We learn from these scriptures, that the law of tithing was a law of God given to ancient Israel. As we explore further, we will learn of its purpose and blessings.

b. The Law of the Fast

LDS Dictionary states,

"Fasting, a voluntary abstinence from food, is a principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ for developing spiritual strength; it has always existed among true believers. Without doubt it was practiced by Adam and his posterity from the beginning whenever they had the gospel among them. The early portion of the Old Testament does not mention fasting, but this is due to the scarcity of the record rather than the absence of the practice. There are frequent references to fasting in the later portion of the Old Testament and New Testament.

[Recall Moses fasting for forty days and nights, twice, (Exodus 24:18; 34:28), and Jesus Christ began his earthly ministry by fasting (Matthew 4:2)].

"The Day of Atonement appears to be the only fast ordered by the law. Other fasts were instituted during the exile (Zechariah 7:3-5; 8:19); and after the return, fasting is shown to be a regular custom (Luke 5:33; 18:12)." (LDS

Bible Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 671).

In Isaiah, Chapter 58, he addressed the true law of the fast with its attendant blessings. He began by calling Israel to repentance for they had altered the very purpose of the fast.

Isaiah 58:3-5

3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

It is unclear if Isaiah is speaking only to those of his day or also ours who have accepted the Lord's day of the fast. What is clear is that they/we have distorted the Lord's purpose and practice of the fast.

W. Cleon Skousen observes,

"Their day of fast is supposed to be a holy day, but they have made it into a holiday. They use it as a day of celebrating and pleasure. Meanwhile, they exact a full measure of labor from their servants, who must cook great feasts which usually mark the end of the fast...When the people fast [they] do [it] for the wrong reasons...It is interesting that the Septuagint version given in the last part of...[vs.4] as follows: 'To smite with the fist the poor. Wherefore fast ye unto me in this manner?' (Adam Clarke. *Commentary on the Bible*, Vol. 4:217; emphasis added)...[they] abuse the poor [rather than sharing their wealth]." (*Isaiah for Modern Times*. Salt Lake City: Ensign Publishing Company, 1984, [2nd Edition, First printing, 1993], 700).

Matthew 6:17-18

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

In these two scriptures, Jesus Christ makes it clear that there are two parts to a fast. The first is the purpose of the fast and the second is that the participant is not to appear as if they are fasting so they do not bring attention to themselves.

Isaiah 58:6-7

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness [purification of the participant from sin], to undo the heavy burdens [harsh feelings toward others], and to let the oppressed go free [forgiveness of others], and that ye break every yoke [personal temptations]?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him [care for the poor and needy]; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh [minister to your own household]?

Some of the elements of our fast as outlined include: (1) To repent from our imperfections and to renew the covenants we have made; (2) To lift up those around us who carry heavy burdens; (3) To rest from our daily labor; and, (4) To share our abundance with those who are in need including the hungry and the naked. We cannot keep the Lord's fast and neglect to care for those in need around us.

Isaiah 58:8-9

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou

take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

To the obedient, numerous blessings will be poured out upon their head. They will receive inspiration and revelation from on high; they will enjoy good health in body and mind; they will enjoy the protection and guidance of the Lord; and, when they seek the Lord in prayer, He will hear their petition and answer their prayers.

Isaiah 58:10

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

W. Cleon Skousen states,

"Those who 'draw out' their souls in compassion by sacrificing to help the poor will not go without their reward from the Lord. They will be like a light in obscure darkness which suddenly shines forth. That which was formerly dark and depressing shall suddenly take on the brightness of the sun at noonday." (*Isaiah Speaks to Modern Times*. Salt Lake City: The Ensign Publishing Company, 1984, [2nd Edition, first printing, February 1993], 703).

Isaiah 58:11-12

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
12 And they that shall of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

John H. Vandenberg states,

"To me this is a promise to those working with the members of the Church who are in need physically and spiritually, 'they that shall be of thee,' or that you may be able to help them--do what? Build the old waste places,' and as you help them to build 'thou shalt raise up the foundations of

(their) many generations (to follow); and then thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach.' In other words, you have helped them to overcome their weaknesses, to restore their souls, to bridge the gap through reactivating, rehabilitation, and restoring the path for them to walk in.

"To those responsible for the leadership of the Saints in every unit of the Church, I say, teach the principles of fasting, in love, in gentleness, in firmness, and in humility. Fasting will give them spiritual strength and help them to develop self-control." (*Conference Report*, April 1963, 28; also in *Improvement Era*, June 1963, 478).

Having established a foundation of the importance of these two doctrine of the gospel, [Tithing and Fasting], we now proceed with their restoration and application in these latter days.

II. The Lord has Commanded Us to Pay Tithing. He has Promised Great Blessings to Those Who Obey This Commandment

a. The Lord's Definition of Tithing

Doctrine and Covenants 119:3-4 [underline added]

3 And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people.

4 And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 119, states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8, 1838, in answer to his supplication: 'O Lord! Show unto thy servants how much thou requires of the properties of thy people for a tithing.' The law of tithing, as understood today, had not been given to the Church previous to this revelation. The **term** tithing in the prayer just quoted and in previous revelations (64:23; 85:3; 97:11) had meant not just one-tenth, but all free-will offerings, or contributions, to the Church funds. The Lord had previously given to the Church the law of consecration and stewardship of property, by which members (chiefly the leading elders)

entered into by covenant that was to be everlasting. Because of the failure on the part of many to abide by this covenant, the Lord withdrew it for a time and gave instead the law of tithing to the whole Church. The Prophet asked the Lord how much of their property He required for sacred purposes. The answer was this revelation." (Heading: Section 119. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 238).

*What is the Lord's definition of tithing as revealed in these verses?

The First Presidency states,

"The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of Church should pay 'one-tenth of all their interest annually,' which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this." (First Presidency letter, 19 March 1970).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"It is remarkable how many excuses can be made and interpretations given as to what constitutes the tenth...It is written, however, that as we measure it shall be measured to us again. If we are stingy with the Lord, he may be stingy with us, or in other words, withhold his blessings." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*. Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums for the year 1949 [Third Series]. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946, 120).

b. The Lord's Promises to Tithe Payers

The following scripture is recorded in the King James Bible, (Malachi 3:8-12), and in the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 24:8-12). It was reiterated word for word by Jesus Christ when he appeared, following his resurrection, to the church members gathered in ancient America. He spoke the words found in Malachi to them as they were not included in their scriptures.

The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states, "Malachi was an Old Testament prophet whose words were not included on the plates of brass [Nephite scriptures] because he did not live until nearly 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. See LDS Bible Dictionary, "Malachi," 728.)" (*The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 183).

Malachi 3:8-9/B/M, 3 Nephi 24:8-9

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

*In what ways do we 'rob God' if we do not pay tithes and offerings?

Doctrine and Covenants 59:21

21 And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.

We prevent God from bestowing needed blessings upon us when we do not obey the commandments He has given us. Our disobedience is an outward manifestation of our rebellion against obeying His will.

Malachi 3:10-12/B/M, 3 Nephi 24:10-12

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

*What does the Lord promise those who pay tithing?

"...pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." It would seem that this blessing is different for each individual, depending upon their particular need. For some it may be improved health, economic well-being, spiritual guidance, or sufficient food and adequate shelter. Obedience brings forth blessings. (see D&C 130-20-21.) Continued obedience brings forth additional blessings.

"I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes." Satan and his minions are real, even though they are unseen. To receive additional protection from their influence and impact on our lives is a special blessing, including sufficient funds to provide for our care and meet our expenses.

"...all nations shall call you blessed:" Our obedience is often reflected to others by the light that emanates from us. This light is generated in response to our sincere desire to keep His commandments and to be of service to those around us.

John A. Widtsoe states,

"The tithe-payer establishes communion with the Lord. This is the happiest reward. Obedience to the law of tithing, as to any other law, brings a deep, inward joy, a satisfaction and understanding that can be won in no other way. Man becomes in a real sense a partner, albeit a humble one, with the Lord in the tremendous, eternal program laid out for human salvation. The principles of truth become clearer of comprehension; the living of them easier of accomplishment. A new nearness is established between man and his Maker. Prayer becomes easier. Doubt retreats; faith advances; certainty and courage buoy up the soul. The spiritual sense is sharpened; the eternal voice is heard more clearly. Man becomes more like his Father in Heaven." (In *Deseret News*, 16 May 1936, Church Section, 5).

*What are some ways you have been blessed as you have lived the law of tithing?

While we were raising our family, finances were limited. It was difficult to afford the high cost of health insurance. Our only option was to cover ourselves for a major

hospitalization and pray that our health would be good enough that we could financially handle any other issues that may occur. As the years passed, our daughter was in college, when, while taking a skiing class, she injured her knee. Fortunately, it did not require surgery, but of the \$500.00 bill, our insurance only paid \$50.00. We were concerned to say the least. I even took a job that provided good health coverage, and then immediately proceeded to break my ankle. While the company finally did pay their share of the costs, the small income and great demands of the job, led us to look for other options. A friend told my wife that we needed to now get good insurance coverage. We made the sacrifice and each month paid the \$1000.00 premium. Only when my wife was diagnosed with cancer did I then more fully realize that had we not followed the council of her friend, and got our health insurance coverage, we would have been wiped out financially, including the loss of our home.

During this entire time, we kept the commandments, including paying a full-tithing. I know from personal experience that the Lord does bless those who are obedient.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"During World War II, my widowed mother supported her three young children on a schoolteacher's salary that was meager. When I became conscious that we went without some desirable things because we didn't have enough money, I asked my mother why she paid so much of her salary as tithing. I have never forgotten her explanation: 'Dallin, there might be some people who can get along without paying tithing, but we can't. The Lord has chosen to take your father and leave me to raise you children. I cannot do that without the blessings of the Lord, and I obtain those blessings by paying an honest tithing. When I pay tithing, I have the Lord's promised that he will bless us, and we must have those blessings if we are to get along.'" (*Conference Report*, April 1994, 43-44; or *Tithing*," in *Ensign*, May 1994, 33).

c. Reasons for Paying Tithing

While paying tithing because we need the blessings may be an important reason to do so, it is not the best reason. The best reason is because we love the Lord, we want to be

obedient. We know that when we do so, it will bring us greater happiness and peace of mind.

*How does paying tithing show our love for the Lord?

*How does it affect our relationship with Him?

Joseph B. Wirthlin states,

"The payment of tithing has less to do with money, but more to do with our faith." (*Conference Report*, April 1990, 41; or "Personal Integrity," in *Ensign*, May 1990, 32).

*How is tithing more about faith than money?

*Why is it sometimes a challenge to pay tithing?

The best advice, I received when I was young was to pay my tithing first, and then live on the balance remaining. Those who paid their bills first, often did not have sufficient for their tithing. It does not make sense economically, but paying tithing and then living on the remaining 90%, left me with money to live on. When I neglected to pay my tithing, the 100% I had was not enough.

*What can we do to overcome challenges in order to pay tithing?

We have to exercise our faith, and trust that if we do our part, the Lord will bless us. Often we are tried to see if we are determined to be obedient, but if we persevere, we will be successful. (see B/M, Ether 12:6.)

d. Use of Tithing Funds

Doctrine and Covenants 120:1

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord, the time is now come, that it shall be disposed of by a council, composed of the First Presidency of my Church, and of the bishop and his council; and by my high council; and by mine own voice unto them, saith the Lord. Even so. Amen.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 120 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8,

1838, making known the disposition of the properties tithed as named in the preceding revelation, section 119."

(Heading: Section 120. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 239).

*Who determines how tithing funds are use?

Today, it is the "Council on the Disposition of Tithes" that determines how tithing funds are used. The terms in the revelation, "the bishop and his council" refers to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church; and, "high council" refers to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. By revelation the members of the council are: The First Presidency; the Quorum of the Twelve; and, the Presiding Bishopric.

Gordon B. Hinckley states regarding the respect for the funds of the Church and their dispersion,

"I keep on the credenza behind my desk a widow's mite that was given me in Jerusalem many years ago as a reminder, a constant reminder, of the sanctity of the funds with which we have to deal. They come from the widow, they are her offering as well as the tithe of the rich man, and they are to be used with care and discretion for the purposes of the Lord. We treat them carefully and safeguard them and try in every way that we can to see that they are used as we feel the Lord would have them used for the upbuilding of His work and the betterment of people." ("This Thing Was Not Done In A Corner," in *Ensign*, November 1996, 50; or *Conference Report*, October, 1996, 69).

*What are tithing funds used for?

Dallin H. Oakes states,

"[Tithing] funds are spent to build and maintain temples and houses of worship, to conduct our worldwide missionary work, to translate and publish scriptures, to provide resources to redeem the dead, to fund religious education, and to support other Church purposes selected by the designated servants of the Lord." ("Tithing," in *Ensign*, May 1994, 35; or *Conference Report*, April, 1994, 46).

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Consider [how you] have been blessed because of temples, meeting houses, missionary work, the scriptures, the work to redeem the dead, and seminary and institute. [The] greatest blessings we can receive are tied directly to obedience to the law of tithing. As we ponder these blessings, we can see that the Lord truly does 'open...the windows of heaven, and pour...out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'" (Malachi 3:10; see also 3 Nephi 24:10).

III. The Lord has Commanded Us to Fast and to Pay Generous Fast Offerings

The Lord has restored in these latter days, the law of the fast.

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9-10, 12

9 And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world. thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

10 For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

12 But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations [offerings] and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"In the highest spiritual sense, the offering of an oblation consists in giving full devotion to the Lord, of offering him a broken heart and a contrite spirit. (D&C 59:8-12; 3 Nephi 9:19-20.) In a lesser and more temporal sense, an oblation is the offering of sacrifices, or of fast offering, or of any charitable contribution to the Church. (Ezekiel 44:30.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958, [Second Edition, 1966], 541-542).

a. What is the Purpose of the Fast?

In the Guide to the Scriptures, we read,

"In the Church today, one Sabbath each month is set aside for the purpose of fasting [and the bearing of testimony.] During this time, Church members go without food and water for twenty-four hours. They then contribute to the Church the money they would have spent on food for those meals. This money is called a fast offering. The Church uses the fast offerings to assist the poor and needy." (Fast, Fasting. *The Guide to the Scriptures*. Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2001, 100).

In addition to fasting on fast days, we may also fast for reasonable amounts of time whenever we feel a special need to do so.

Fasting is more than simply going without food. Fasting can be a joyful experience when we fast with a purpose, prepare for the fast, and pray.

*What are some of the purposes of fasting?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"[We can fast:] to draw nearer to the Lord, receive guidance, increase spiritual strength, humble ourselves, subject our bodily appetites to our spirits, overcome temptations or weaknesses, strengthen our testimonies, and ask the Lord to bless others." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 96).

*In what ways has fasting with a purpose added meaning to your fasts?

It helps me to focus my thoughts and prayers specifically on the reason for my fast. As I do so, I am better able to understand the Lord's hand in the process.

b. How Do We Prepare to Fast?

*What are some things we can do to prepare to fast?

Reading the scriptures always helps me to focus my mind on my fast, rather than just going without food. Counting my blessings helps me to better appreciate all the Lord has done for me in my life, and reminds me to be more grateful.

*In what ways is our fasting more meaningful when we prepare for it?

It is one thing to go without food for 24 hours. It is quite another to do it with a specific purpose in mind. The purpose changes the experience from just going without food to seeking, receiving, and recognizing spiritual intervention.

c. Is Prayer a Part of the Fast?

*Why should we pray at the beginning a fast, during the fast, and the end of the fast.

Prayer sets the tone for our fast, and gives it purpose. Our wise, we are just going without food.

*Why is it important to pray when we fast?

Prayer changes everything. My fast becomes more specific and also more reflective as I talk to my Heavenly Father regarding the reason why I am fasting.

d. Why is Giving Fast Offerings Important?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"...on fast Sunday, a proper fast includes giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need. Fast offerings are...used first to help those in the ward and stake where the members reside. Bishops may use these funds to provide food, shelter, clothing, and other life-sustaining aid to those in need." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 96).

*Why is giving fast offerings an important part of living the law of the fast?

As King Benjamin asked, "...are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold and for silver, and for all riches which we have of every kind" (B/M, Mosiah 4:19). The proverb is true in stating, "There, but for the grace of God, Go I." There is often a fine line between those who are in need and those who are going to be in need. How can I turn to God and seek His guidance and direction, if I am not willing to give to those less fortunate?

e. How Do We Determine How Much to Give?

*How generous should we be when we pay fast offerings?

Spencer W. Kimball states,

"Sometimes we have been a bit penurious [unwilling to share] and figure that we had for breakfast one egg, and that cost so many cents and then we give that to the Lord. I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous...and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more--ten times more where we are in a position to do it." (*Conference Report*, April 1974, 184).

Some years ago, while serving as a Bishop, there was a young successful family who regularly paid their tithing, but did not contribute to the fast offering fund. The Stake President counseled me to speak to the husband regarding his circumstances. When I met with He and his wife, I inquired regarding their circumstances. They assured me that they were doing fine. I then asked them about their feelings regarding the monthly fast fund. They looked at each other, nodded, and said, "Thank you Bishop, from this day forward, we will contribute monthly to the fast offering fund." They were faithful to their commitment. Later, this man also served as the Bishop. When we are faithful, the Lord is able to bless us. When we are not, the blessings are withheld.

*What are some of the consequences when we pay generous fast offerings?

We learn to be more considerate of those who are need, while becoming more grateful for the blessings we have received from the Lord. We learn that at one time or another in our life, we too will be in need of the Lord's temporal assistance. If we were generous, He will surely be generous with us when we are in need.

f. What Blessings Are Specifically Connected with Fasting?

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"[What would happen] if the principles of fast day and the fast offering were observed throughout the world? The hungry would be fed, the naked clothed, the homeless sheltered. Our burden of taxes would be lightened...A new measure of concern and unselfishness would grow in the hearts of people everywhere. Can anyone doubt the divine wisdom that created this program that has blessed the people of the Church as well as many who are not members of the Church?" (*Conference Report*, April 1991, 73; or "The State of the Church," in *Ensign*, May 1991, 52-53).

One of the common attributes of the "natural man" that seems to plague even the righteous man is selfishness. We tend to think of ourselves rather than others. It is a rare individual that is generous and thoughtful regarding the needs of others. Many of us offer judgment upon the poor and needy, even silently telling ourselves that surely they must have brought about their condition themselves through personal neglect or poor judgment and, therefore, we are "excused" for not giving them assistance.

In the LDS Hymnal, the words of one of the songs serves to remind me to be more generous:

**"Because I have been given much, I too must give;
Because of thy great bounty, Lord, each day I live
I shall divide my gifts with thee With every brother
that I see
Who has the need of help from me.**

**"Because I have been sheltered, fed by thy great care,
I can not see another's lack and I not share
My glowing fire, my loaf of bread, My roof's safe
shelter over head,
That he too may be comforted.**

**"Because I have been blessed by thy great love, dear
Lord,
I'll share thy love again, according to thy word.
I shall give love to those in need; I'll show that
love by word and deed:
Thus shall my thanks be thanks in deed."**

("Because I Have Been Given Much, #219. Text. Grace Noll Crowell, 1877-1969. Music. Phillip Landgrave. b. 1935. *LDS Hymns*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985).

If I were able to gain just one blessing by fasting, and that was "to be a little less selfish," I would be richly rewarded. Likely, I will need to continue to fast each month for the rest of my life, and to memorize and apply the words of this song, if I am to truly overcome this failing in myself.

2 Corinthians 9:6-9

**6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.
8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:
9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.**

In counsel to the Corinthians, Paul reminds us that God is pleased when we give our offering cheerfully. To give grudgingly, is better than not giving, but the real blessings of giving come when we do so with an attitude of cheerfulness. When we give cheerfully and without regard of praise or recognition, we will become closer in our actions to being more like Our Savior.

The law of Tithing and the law of the Fast were given by the Lord to help us to be more generous with our means in caring for the poor and the needy. As we live these laws

more fully in our lives, not only will the poor and the needy be cared for, but we will draw yet closer to the Lord, in both word and deed.

IV. Conclusions

The law of Tithing: It was an important part of Israel's history and was obeyed by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It likely was first practiced by Adam and Eve. A tithe is defined as giving a tenth part of our income to the Lord for the building up of His kingdom on the earth.

The law of the Fast: While we have recorded instances in both the Old and New Testament it is likely that Adam and Eve also practiced and received blessings as they participated in the fast.

The Prophet Isaiah told of the blessings that would come to those who lived the law of the fast. (see Isaiah 58:8-10.)

The law of tithing was first given to the saints in our dispensation in July, 1838, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 119. It remains as given anciently, "the members of the Church should pay one-tenth of all their...[income] annually." (First Presidency Letter, March, 1970). As we are faithful in obeying this law, the Lord will bless us and our love for Him will increase.

His blessings include: "pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it;" "rebuke the devourer for your sakes;" and, "all nations shall call us blessed." We will become more like Our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The tithing funds are used to build temples and meeting houses; support a world-wide missionary effort; redeem the dead; fund religious education; and other needs in the Church.

The law of the Fast was given in our day on August 1, 1831, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 58. It was given to care for the poor and needy, which comes through our contributing to the fast offering fund.

Great are the benefits that come to the poor and the needy, but, as we contribute, we also learn to be less selfish and

more thoughtful of others. While fasting, we also draw closer to the Lord as we express our gratitude for the blessings we have received.

As we live the laws of tithing and fasting, we draw even closer to the Lord, not just in word, but in deed.

Our next lesson [D&C#18], we will address the significance of latter-day Temples and the important blessings that can only be obtained by entering into the House of the Lord on earth.