

Are Women and Children Required to Tithe and Give Offerings?

By Terry Moore and Art Braidic

© 2015 the Eternal Church of God

All Scriptures are from the New King James translation unless otherwise noted.

The Scriptures indicate that God's people must tithe and give freewill offerings. There are also required offerings three times a year. Notice the Eternal's command:

Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Because this verse specifically refers to men, some have wondered if women or children are required to give offerings. It has long been the judgment of God's Church that women and children who do not have a source income are not required to tithe or give offerings. However, when a woman or child does have a job, or receive income, tithes and offerings are a required act of worship.

The reason women are not mentioned in the command is because Israel was a male dominate society. In addition, many people lived long distances from the temple in Jerusalem. It was often an extensive journey to attend the three pilgrimage feasts where offerings are required. This meant that the men would need to leave their flocks, herds, and farmland unattended during these times. Because much of their property could be damaged or lost if not continually maintained, God mercifully required only the male heads of household to attend. This judgment allowed for some family members and/or servants to stay back and take care of the property while the heads of households traveled to Jerusalem. Though everyone in the family was welcome to attend the pilgrimage feasts, only the males were required to be present.

In addition, all males held a position that was symbolic of a priest in the family. While only Levites served in the temple, all men were required to work in service for his family by providing and protecting them. This includes instructing and upholding God's law in the home (Exo. 19:6; Deu. 6:6-9).

Because Israel widely failed to live up to God's standards, gentiles were grafted in (Rom. 11:17-24). When this occurred, God made it known that, although males were to continue as head of the family, there was no differentiation regarding race or gender when it came to salvation and a relationship with Christ. As Paul wrote:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:28-29).

Based on the instructions to Israel and the New Testament Church, it is understood that anyone who has earned income must tithe and give offerings. Those with no earned income are not obligated. In addition, if a woman has a husband who is the sole provider, and he is not converted and refuses to give tithes or offerings; she is blameless for his violation of God's command (1Cor. 7:12-13).