



# St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church



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Rev. Fr. Peter G. Balkas  
Proestamenos

## WELCOME TO SAINT NECTARIOS!

Thank you for visiting our web site! We feel blessed by your interest in our Orthodox Christian Community and invite you to become part of our parish family. As a parish family, the Saint Nectarios community provides a parish home that welcomes and encourages everyone to participate in the Body of Christ through our Orthodox church.

In preparing for your Stewardship commitment for 2007, I ask that you take time to reflect on the immense goodness of God and His many blessings to you, as Christian stewardship is a direct way of expressing our thanksgiving to God for these gifts. The Bible teaches us that we are to give to God in proportion to what He has given to us by offering 10% of our time, talents and resources to Him through the work of our Church.

Saint Nectarios is a stewardship parish where each member has the privilege of determining the level at which they are able to give of their time, talent and treasure. Please keep in mind that our operating budget is funded by the pledges received from the members of our parish. For your 2007 Stewardship pledge please prayerfully consider the amount of your offering.

Join me and many others in taking "*A Leap of Faith*" in following Biblical guidelines of giving in proportion to how you have received. For 2007, we are asking everyone to follow Biblical guidelines and give in proportion to how you have received. Our 2007 recommended minimum pledge is 2% of your annual income. Because we have all been blessed in many different ways, the scale of offerings for Financial Stewardship will vary based on each individual's level of financial resources. In addition, I understand the current economic environment and that many of us are living with financial stress and hardship. You are not expected to give what you don't have. Whatever you choose to give is between you and God.

All are welcome to become a member of our parish family. Please fill out a pledge card and be active in the liturgical life of our Christian community. We look forward to getting to know you and for you to know all of us!

In His Work,  
Rev. Fr. Peter G. Balkas  
Proestamenos

# **SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT STEWARDSHIP**

## **1. What is Christian Stewardship?**

Christian Stewardship means effectively living and practicing our belief in Jesus Christ by offering the gifts that God has given each of us – our time, talents and treasure --to the glory of God. It is meant to help each of us to actively and prayerfully strive to do our unique part in fulfilling the commission we receive at baptism and chrismation: to be witnesses of our Lord's grace and love and to help people come to Him.

Stewardship, the most ancient form of giving to the Church, comes from the Greek word "oikonomia", which means managing another's property or affairs. It is the one way that the support of the Church is viewed as a matter of personal commitment and conscience. It is the way of maintaining our Church with Christian care, an active understanding of our Church's needs, and by committing an honest portion of our time, talents and treasure for the work and support of the Church. It is a fair way to give because it enables each of us to give back to God in proportion to how God has given to each of us.

## **2. Why a Stewardship Program at St. Nectarios?**

Under the Stewardship program each of us are given the privilege to decide how much time, which skills, and the amount of our financial resources we commit to the Church each year. The intent of Stewardship is to help achieve a wholehearted and joyful giving of the gifts we receive from God instead of feeling like we are "paying membership dues". Remember, our talents, abilities and resources are God's gifts to us. How we use them is our gift to God.

## **3. What is a Stewardship Pledge?**

Your Stewardship Pledge is a statement of intention made in good faith to give of your time, talents and financial resources to support the ministries and operation of God's Holy Church. A new pledge is made for each calendar year. It is made by filling out the "Financial Stewardship" portion of the pledge card for your financial commitment, and the "Time and Talents Stewardship" portion of the pledge card for your commitment of time and talents to the various ministries of Saint Nectarios. Your annual financial pledge provides the parish with an assured level of financial support. The time and talent pledge helps to match members with the various missions of the Church. Each working, self-supporting adult over 18 should complete his/her own pledge card and make his/her own commitment of time, talents and treasure.

#### **4. How much should I give to the Church financially as an annual Stewardship Pledge?**

It's between you and God to decide what is the right amount for you. The Bible gives guidance by teaching that our offering should be a proportion of our income and instructs us to "tithe", which means to give the first 10% of our income to God. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese considers 10% to be a guideline; the right percentage for you could be more, or it could be less depending on your circumstances. The Archdiocese also considers 4% of annual income as the beginning of a stewardship-based offering. The average giving among all church-going Christian families in the United States is about 3%. For an annual household income of \$50,000 this corresponds to \$1500 per year. A simple guideline to follow is the "one hour's income per week" rule-of-thumb. It is a good starting point, which calculates to about 2.5% of your annual income. At Saint Nectarios, we recommend that you consider pledging 2% of our annual income as your stewardship offering. This equals less than one hour's income per week committed to God and His Holy Church.

The key points to remember when developing your financial giving plan to the Church are:

- a) Give With A Total Commitment—As St. Paul said, "God loves a cheerful giver." He loves people who understand that everything we have--everything we are--comes from Him. As Stewards let us give in thanksgiving and experience the joy of giving. The more you trust in God, the more generous you become. God will provide you with the resources you truly need through His blessings.
- b) Give Sacrificially—true Christian giving means giving up something else in order to give to the Lord. It means giving up spending on things and activities that may distract us from the Lord. It does not mean causing financial hardship--just as fasting from food should not be done at the expense of one's health, but to help us grow spiritually.
- c) Give Proportionately--get into the habit of establishing your stewardship financial pledge as a percentage of your income. This is sound financial planning and helps put your pledge into perspective.

#### **5. Is there a specific minimum amount required?**

No, there is no mandatory minimum. The Stewardship Program at Saint Nectarios gives each of us the opportunity to reflect on God's gifts to us to help determine the level of our personal commitment.

However, as we discussed above in Question 4, Biblical guidelines for offerings are based one's income; *Give Back To Him According to How You Have Received*. Although the Biblical guidelines for offering are 10% of your annual income, we recommend that you consider pledging a minimum of 2% of your annual income as your stewardship offering. This equals less than one hour's income per week committed to God and His Holy Church.

Why do we recommend that you offer a minimum of 2% of your annual income and not 10%? The answer is this: We are all imperfect people living in an imperfect world. For those of us that have never considered making a stewardship offering, 10% may seem unrealistic. That is why we ask that you consider your stewardship offerings start at just 2% of your annual income (less than 1 hour's pay per week). And every year, as you consider renewing your pledge, reflect on God's goodness and strive to increase your stewardship offering by another percentage.

## **6. What does the Church do for me?**

The Church exists to help us sustain and strengthen our relationship with Christ our Savior, so that we may continue to strive for living a righteous Christian life. Without the Church what do we have? Nothing. In the Gospels, God offers us a new life. The Church, and ONLY the Church, brings that Gospel to us. Christ established the Church to help prepare as many of us as possible to become like Him so that we may live an eternal life with Him. No other group or organization shares God's gift of life in Christ. By committing as a Steward, you help keep the Word of God alive here at Saint Nectarios and you are supporting the work of our Lord.

## **7. How should I fulfill my financial commitment?**

Your financial offering is not due when you submit your pledge card. Depending on your situation, you can make payments, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or in one lump sum. You choose the manner that suits you best. We recommend monthly offerings because it helps us develop a good practice of budgeting and making regular contributions. In addition, it provides the Church with a more balanced cash flow throughout the year. Generally, it is easier for most families to manage periodic payments.

In addition, Saint Nectarios offers an automated giving program to help you conveniently and consistently contribute toward Stewardship. This is a reliable, safe, and simple way to put your Stewardship Pledge into action. It allows you to make your financial offering through planned giving and activates your generosity into ongoing Stewardship.

Your offering payments are made through pre-authorized charges to your credit card. You determine the amount and frequency of your automated offering (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, one lump sum). Because your offering is given automatically and consistently, you won't need to play "catch-up" or worry about submitting your contribution timely. Automated offerings also help Saint Nectarios to better meet its financial goals and development objectives by providing steady, more predictable revenues throughout the year.

To make your Stewardship contribution via automated offerings, please be sure to provide your credit card information when completing your 2007 pledge card.

## **8. Can a commitment of time and talent take the place of a financial commitment?**

Christian Stewardship is making Christ the first priority in the use of the time, talents and treasures that God had entrusted to us. The Bible instructs us to reciprocate God's goodness by returning a proportionate share back to Him in perpetuating His work of salvation. It is not right to avoid making a financial commitment by contributing more of one's time and talent. Everyone is encouraged to support the Church financially, not because it is a responsibility, but because it is a privilege. This is all part of making a total commitment to our Lord and to our Church.

## **9. Is it necessary to turn in a pledge card?**

By submitting your pledge card, you, the Orthodox Christian, are established as a member of Saint Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church. Your pledge card also allows you to indicate when and how you intend to fulfill your pledge. As your financial circumstances change, your financial pledge may be increased or decreased at any time by contacting Father Peter.

In addition, pledges give our Church a way to plan for what it can and cannot offer in a given year. Submitted pledge cards give our Parish Leaders the opportunity to plan for what has been entrusted in their care – the proper management, administration and future of Saint Nectarios Parish.

## **10. What does my Stewardship Pledge entitle?**

Your Stewardship Pledge establishes you as a member in financial good standing. It entitles you with the voting right which may be exercised at General Assembly meetings -- electing Parish Council members, approving the annual budget, approving/opposing special projects that go beyond the daily operating expenses of the church.

## **11. Will my financial Stewardship Pledge be confidential?**

YES! Information regarding the amount of your personal pledge is restricted. Although aggregate figures will be published to chart the annual progress of the Stewardship Program, the amount individual pledges will not be published. If you have any questions or concerns regarding confidentiality, please contact Father Peter.