

Faith Promise Offerings –

Faith Promise is a means of funding missional activity in the local church. It has been used within many Christian denominations and groups as a very effective means to raise the resources needed to effectively impact our world.

Faith Promise is a commitment between an individual and God. It is a one-year promise of a sum of money that an individual, in dependence upon God, intends to give to missions. It is not based on money that you have at hand or in your bank account. The aim is higher. People are urged to ask God what they should trust Him for, the amount that He will enable them to give to missions during the coming year. It's that simple. It's about faith and obedience. It's about asking God what He wants you to give, and then trusting Him to provide as you give in faith.

Some common questions:

Q: What is the purpose of the *Faith Promise* offering?

A: We use **Faith Promise** offerings to support missionaries and mission-oriented organizations. As a mission board, we annually plan, and prayerfully appropriate, your **Faith Promise** offerings to 25-30 missionaries and organizations.

Q: So how do I participate?

A: During Missions Month, we are asking individuals and families to prayerfully seek God's guidance about a giving plan, and to consider a "statement of intent" to give a certain amount over the next year. Over the course of the following year, **Faith Promise** Offerings can be given weekly, monthly, or in various ways.

Q: Is *Faith Promise* a pledge?

A: By definition, a **Faith Promise** is different than pledging, although we sometimes use the word pledge when talking about Faith Promise offerings. By technical definition, a **pledge** is a **vow**, which scripturally binds one to perform the pledge, even in changing circumstances. Pledges can also be legally binding. With a **Faith Promise**, people make commitments to give if the funds are, or become, available. It is understood that if God doesn't provide the funds there is no obligation to give. Committing to faith promises are scriptural and acceptable to the Lord.

Q: Isn't this just the same as my normal weekly offering?

A: Not quite. Faith Promise is different. Our normal offering is the tithe (normally understood as 10% of our income), or whatever amount God has personally led us to give to the regular functioning of His church. **Faith Promise** is an offering over and above our tithe, which is specifically given to funding missional outreach by our church.

Q: Don't we support missions through our normal weekly offering?

A: In some ways. There are aspects of our church budget that fund missions, defined as reaching out to those who are outside our cultural or social demographic. Our regular budget also includes line items for Mission Board operations, such as leadership materials, funds to conduct our Missions emphasis each fall, and other indirect expenses. Historically, though, our offerings have not been used to directly support missionaries or mission agencies in a systematic and regular way.

Q: How is the *Faith Promise* money designated?

A: The **Faith Promise** offering can be marked on your giving envelope, and is designated in that manner. In terms of your giving records and implications for tax deductions, it is the same, but **Faith Promise** offerings do not go into the main budget line of the church.

Q: How do I know how much to give to *Faith Promise*?

A: After praying and seeking God's guidance on how much He would have you give, you should feel comfortable with the amount you decide upon. It may be \$5 a week, or \$450 per month, but it is the internal joy of giving and being led by the Lord, rather than the "I must", that really is a mark of the right amount.

Q: Can I still give to other works and projects outside of Calvary's mission support?

A: Of course! Many of you are giving sacrificially in many ways to missionaries and mission organizations of which you are aware. Periodically, Calvary is made aware of a need, and special offerings are made available to the membership. Adult Bible Fellowship classes are also collecting periodic offerings that may also have a mission purpose. Yet, ***Faith Promise*** is a means to help everyone have the opportunity to give and focuses our church on particular missionaries and organizations, and helps foster a relationship with these designated efforts.

Q: Is *Faith Promise* a biblical concept?

A: The early church did not have formal programs such as this, but II Corinthians 8:3-5 lays out this very idea when it says of the Macedonian believers, "they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will." We want to emulate their faith and obedience in our own time and place.

Q: Do I have to take part in the *Faith Promise* program?

A: No. In our church we firmly believe that all giving should be done in obedience to the Lord, and it is essentially a voluntary commitment between you and God. We do ask you to pray that the Lord will lead you and your family in determining an amount that you will give to support missions over and beyond your tithe.

Q: Will the statement of intent to give through *Faith Promise* be anonymous?

A: Yes. Each year during the fall Missions emphasis, we will be conducting a review and awareness campaign to help raise awareness of the ***Faith Promise*** program, and encourage individuals and families to provide us with an anonymous ***statement of intent*** to give a certain amount to missions over the next fiscal year. This will enable the Mission Board to forecast and plan ways in which we can support missionaries and organizations. In summary, the ***statement of intent*** forms help us to form our vision for who we, with the Lord's guidance, feel we can support over the next year, and to what extent.

Q: Will the amount I actually give through *Faith Promise* be anonymous?

Yes. Our pastoral staff and mission board members will not know how much you give. Our financial secretary, who already operates under the strictest guidelines of confidentiality in all matters related to finances, will be the only person to know individual giving, and will only report balances to the Mission Board, and to the church. Of course, you may also designate a ***Faith Promise*** offering in a totally anonymous manner if you do not wish to have a giving statement for tax purposes.

Q: How will the *Faith Promise* offerings be reported?

A: Our ***Faith Promise*** offerings are reported most Sunday mornings along with the main church giving reports, and are reported as a separate account. We have been blessed in recent years to have more given that was indicated on intent forms. Yet, it is our desire to encourage and exhort all families to consider contributing beyond the tithe to missions through ***Faith Promise*** as a way to increase and strengthen our financial support and partnerships with our missionaries and mission organizations.