

Money, Wills and Estates

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Estate & Will Provisions

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TITHING

The word "tithe" means "one tenth". The practice of paying tithes is very ancient; for we find that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. (Gen.14:20; Heb. 7:6) Jacob promised to imitate this piety. (Gen.28:22) Both cases were voluntary. Tithing was ordained by Moses under the law as a sort of a "tax." (Lev. 27:30) (1) It consisted of a 10th of all the produce of the land. (Lev. 27:30) (2) Of all the cattle. (Lev. 27:32) (3) Of oxen, sheep, and of holy things consecrated. (2 Chron. 31:6.) It was never money. Usually it was to be given once every 3 years; but some seemed to be once yearly. (Deut. 14:28,29; Deut. 14:22)

This was to be given to the Levites for their services. (Num. 18:20-24,26,28; Neh. 10:37,38) The 11 tribes of Israel were each to pay a tenth (tithe) to the 12th tribe (Levites) who had no inheritance. Theirs was the duty (privilege) of taking care of the temple and tabernacle service, etc. (2 Chron. 31:5,12; Joshua 13:32-33) It was also to be shared "with the stranger, the fatherless and the widow". (Deut. 14:28, 29; 26:12, 13)

It was to be offered "where the; Lord shall choose to put His name there." (Deut. 12:5-7, 11; 14:22-27) (the ark, the tabernacle, or the temple?) If that place was too far away, then they could turn into money the tithe, and bring that value in money to the place of sacrifice, and invest this at the local area of sacrifice. In Mal. 3:8 the Jews were reproved for withholding the tithe. But the Pharisees were scrupulous in paying this. (Luke 11:42; 18:12; Matt. 23:23) This was still under the law, which was in effect until Jesus died on the cross.

In the New Testament neither our Saviour, nor His apostles have commanded any thing in this affair of tithes. Rather, Jesus in Matt. 6:1-4 taught that "when you do your alms" (or good deeds or righteousness) "don't let your left hand know what your right hand doeth." It would be difficult to "tithe" and conform to this.

Paul taught the Christians to give "as the Lord had prospered them" (1 Cor. 16:2). Then in 2 Cor. 8 Paul is teaching concerning giving; in verse 12 the "willing mind" is stressed. In 2 Cor. 9:7 Paul stresses that they give "according as they purposed in their heart." Also, "God loveth a cheerful giver." We read in Luke 8:1-3 of certain women "ministering to Jesus of their substance."

In all of these instances, nothing is mentioned about "tithing." In Acts 15:13-21 we read of the apostles settling it definitely as to what part of the old Testament law should be brought to bear on Gentiles in the New Testament dispensation. Only four things were mentioned; but neither the sabbath day nor tithing were included.

TTT Editor's Notes: The following is reported to be the Eldon Tenniswood instructions given in the early 1980's.

Eldon Tenniswood was the Overseer of California and a few other states in Western USA from 1974 until his death May 23, 2003 .

PROVISIONS TO BE INCORPORATED IN WILL (LEAVING ESTATE TO THE WORK)

1. Standard terminology included in all wills, simple in form, and written by an attorney.
2. Name an executor, preferably someone close to you geographically. It could be a person or a Bank, etc.
3. Name as beneficiaries (one to receive estate and an alternate, Two persons) who are firmly established in the truth and beyond reproach who can be relied upon to follow your instructions and the instructions of the workers.

Note: In case of the death of one of these people the will should be amended to reflect this status and a new name included. Changes in beneficiaries is done at your discretion and always should be a person or persons you have the utmost confidence in particularly in this type of arrangement.

4. It will not be necessary to give specific instructions in the will about how the estate is to be used or distributed as your wishes and instructions will be covered in a letter to be sent to both of the beneficiaries and to the worker who has the general oversight and responsibility in your area.
5. Provision should be made in the will to allow appropriate executor and probate fees and other expenses attendant with this procedure.
6. Your legal counsel will probably question the lack of specific instruction about how your estate will be distributed, however, you have chosen two people who you have trust and confidence in and they can be trusted to carry out your wishes in line with your letter of instruction.

CODICIL TO WILL

I, _____ a resident of _____ (county) _____, (state) _____ declare this to be the first (or second or third) Codicil to my Will dated _____.

By this Codicil to my Last Will and Testament dated _____, I give and bequeath to the overseer of California, of the fellowship of Christians with whom I have worshiped the last _____ years of my life, incumbent at the time of my death, and to his successor or successors in office, one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) (or, "my entire estate, to be used for such charitable, religious or other similar purpose of furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ of which they are ministers, by him or by his successor or successors as in his, or their, sole and uncontrolled discretion or judgment he, or they shall deem worthy.

If any provision of this Will or of any Codicil should be invalid, it is my intention that all of the remaining provisions thereof shall continue to be fully effective.

This Codicil was signed by me on the _____ date of _____, 19____ at _____ (city), _____ (state) _____

Witness

_____ (with address)

_____ (with address)

(The above should be in your own handwriting on a plain sheet of paper with no printing or typing on it, or taken to your attorney.)