

## A Tale of Tithers



Timing is everything, they say. So, when Jim Humphrey came home from a retreat in 1963, and he and Charlotte had four children under the age of five, a house too small for the family with too few pieces of furniture, and with Jim's future at the law firm in doubt, it may *not* have been the best time to announce, "I think we should start tithing."

Charlotte's simple response: "You're crazy as hell."

Tithing is based on the Old Testament mandate to return a certain percentage of one's assets to God. Although 10% is the amount often quoted, today's stewardship model takes the approach of leaving the amount to be returned up to each individual Catholic. There may be something significant about 10%, but there is something deeply significant about actually choosing any benchmark (be it 2%, 5% or 10%) and making that your return to God.

Over the years, Charlotte came around, "It's been a wonderful experience. Tithing has been a real blessing in our lives—its result is the exact opposite of what I expected." The Humphrey children, now grown, saw the effects of tithing as they grew up, both the challenge of tithing in tough times when money was scarce and in good times when they seemed to be unexpectedly blessed. And Charlotte claims that tithing taught her the right use of money. "Faithful people have to give first to God—we get what's left over."

So what happened back in 1963, 40 years ago, after Charlotte offered her knee-jerk opinion on tithing? Jim just said, "Let's try it."

"We didn't talk for a week," Charlotte says. "But, we've never quit tithing. The more we tithe, the more we have."

Charlotte advises, "I encourage people to just try it, maybe for a year."