

Romney: Releasing tax returns would publicize his church tithe

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Mitt Romney said recently that one of the reasons he's distressed about disclosing his tax returns is that everyone would see how much money he and his wife Ann have donated to the Mormon church, and that's a number he wants to keep private.

"Our church doesn't publish how much people have given," Romney told *Parade* magazine for its August 26 cover story.

"This is done entirely privately. One of the downsides of releasing one's financial information is that this is now all public, but we had never intended our contributions to be known. It's a very personal thing between ourselves and our commitment to our God and to our church."

Romney has released his 2010 tax returns in his White House campaign and, so far, a summary of last year's tax information. But despite pressure from Republican opponents in the primaries and President Obama's reelection campaign, Romney has long refused to disclose more.

While it may not be a major reason for his refusal, Romney says disclosing his charitable donations isn't something he wants to do. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are encouraged to donate 10 percent of their gross income to the faith, and Romney's disclosure early this year shows he did just that and also forked over more through his family charity.

Romney pulled in more than \$40 million in 2010 and 2011, his campaign reported, and paid about \$4.1 million to the LDS Church. That's in addition to about \$4.8 million his Tyler Charitable Foundation donated to the faith.

Over time, the Romneys, among the wealthiest Mormons, with a net worth of around \$250 million, have likely doled out many millions to the LDS Church. —*Salt Lake Tribune*