

FINANCING THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

INTRO: In this lesson we will look at the subject of church finances. What does the church do that requires money? Where should the money come from to do the work of the church? When should these funds be gathered? And where do we as individuals fit into God's plan?

I. WHAT DOES THE CHURCH DO THAT REQUIRES MONEY?

A. Local needs in evangelism & edification.

1. Support the local preacher. READ I COR 9:3-15.
2. Costs involved in providing for a place of worship-- maintenance, utilities, etc. 1 Cor 14:23; Acts 20:8
3. Radio, newspaper, phone evangelism, correspondence courses, postage, tracts, etc.
4. Teaching supplies, lesson materials, etc. 1 Tim 3:15

B. Alms to needy members of the body of Christ.

1. The local church has an obligation to relieve the needs of its destitute members until they can provide for themselves. READ ACTS 4:32-35.
2. Occasionally, a more permanent need may arise. If so, the church is obligated to provide for "widows indeed" on a continuing basis, 1 Tim. 5:3-9.

C. Each congregation, according to its ability, has a duty to help spread the gospel outside its own community.

1. The church in Jerusalem under inspired leadership did, Acts 11:22.
2. After it was strengthened, the church in Antioch likewise sent out preachers to preach in other areas. Acts 13:1-5; 14:25-27.
3. The church in Philippi supported Paul while he preached in Thessalonica & other places.

READ PHIL. 1:3-5; 4:14-16.

4. The church in Thessalonica also reached out to others with the gospel, 1 Thess. 1:8.

D. Sometimes it even becomes necessary for a congregation to send alms to another congregation in need. Acts 11:29; 1 Cor. 16:2.

II. WHERE SHOULD THE MONEY COME FROM TO DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH?

A. Christians should give generously to support that work.

1. 1 Cor. 16:2, each one of you.
2. Acts 11:29, each disciple according to his ability
3. 2 Cor. 9:7, each one give as he purpose in his heart
4. Acts 4:34 All [ch members] who were possessors gave into a common fund, Acts 2:44-45.

B. We have no authority to solicit funds from others. No command, no example, no inference. If someone chooses to put a donation in the plate as it goes by, that is his prerogative. But if Christians won't support the work of the Lord, why should they expect someone else to do so.

C. We have no authority to put the church into the business of washing cars, selling cakes & pies, or any other business venture. No command. No example. No inference. No authority.

1. To supplement our giving with such innovations would be to do what God has not sanctioned.
2. If we became effective at it, no doubt, some would consider it a good excuse not to give, thus omitting what God has commanded.

III. WHEN SHOULD SUCH FUNDS BE COLLECTED.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2.

- A. Why? Why not? Why not just do what He said?
- B. What about Wednesday evening?
 1. It is not what He said.
 2. If we give as we have prospered on Sunday, most of us would have little or nothing to give on Wednesday anyway.

III. A PERSONAL QUESTION: HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

A. Before we try to answer, let us note:

1. I must want to give, 2 Cor. 8:12. No amount of giving will make me right if I don't want to give it.
2. I need to first give myself to the Lord, 2 Cor. 8:5. Then other giving will come much easier.
3. My giving should be prompted by love, 2 Cor. 8:24; 1 Cor. 13:3.
4. I need to realize I am a steward & must account for all that is put in my trust, Acts 4:32.

B. Now, how much should I give?

1. It depends on my abundance, 1 Cor. 16:2.
2. Depends on what I have, 2 Cor. 8:12.
3. Depends on the need, Acts 4:32-35; 2 Cor. 8:3
4. It involves my priorities, Matt. 6:33
5. It reflects my thankfulness, 2 Cor. 9:10-11, 15

CONCLUSION: My friend, Joe Fitch, has said, "It would be easier if God sent bills." But by wanting to do right, & by a careful study of God's word, we will do the right thing.

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