

Your Contribution is Important

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Throughout the history of God's people, the monetary contribution of the people to the work of the Lord has been important.
 - 1. Under the law of Moses, the people were to tithe or give a tenth of their possessions to the Lord. (Leviticus 27:30-32) This tenth was to be given so that the tribe of Levi could live. (Numbers 18:21-32, esp. 21)
 - 2. Under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, no specific command is given regarding tithing or giving of a tenth. However, as we will show with this lesson, just as there was work to be funded under the law of Moses, there is also work that must be funded under the New Covenant.
 - B. It is the purpose of this lesson to examine the subject of the contribution under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. With this lesson, we will show the following:
 - 1. The collection is controlled by the Lord.
 - 2. The collection is to be funded by the local church.
 - 3. The collection is to be used for specific purposes.
 - 4. The rules for the collection process.
 - 5. Without the collection, the work of the Lord would go unfulfilled.
 - C. Let us begin by showing that the collection is controlled by the Lord.
- I. THE COLLECTION IS TO BE CONTROLLED BY THE LORD. (Acts 5:3-4)**
- A. Before we give, the money belongs to us. This fact is seen in a statement by Peter. (Acts 5:3-4)
 - B. The fact that the money belonged to Ananias and Sapphira before they gave, implies that once the money was given, "laid at the apostles feet," the money no longer belonged to the giver.
 - C. To whom does the money belong after it is given? Consider the following examples.
 - 1. The money was given to the apostles. (Acts 4:34,35; 5:3)
 - 2. The apostles used the money to provide for the needs of the "multitude of those who believed" or the church. (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-4)
 - 3. The churches in Macedonia used the money collected by sending relief to the saints in Jerusalem. (II Corinthians 8:1-4)

4. We also see instances where specific churches used the money collected by sending aid to Paul.
 - a. The saints in Philippi sent aid to Paul. (Philippians 4:14-20)
 - b. The saints in Macedonia sent aid to Paul. (II Corinthians 11:8-9)
5. In all the examples, we see the contribution or the financial help being sent from a church to those in need, starting with the church seen in Acts 2. These examples help us to draw the conclusion that once the money was given, it belonged to the local church. The money was to be used by the local church in doing the work of the local church, as dictated by the Lord through His apostles.

II. THE COLLECTION IS TO BE FUNDED BY THE LOCAL GROUP.

- A. In the first century, when there was a need, there was a collection. (Acts 4:32-36; I Corinthians 16:1-4)
- B. The members of the church funded the work of the local church. They did not use bake sales, car washes, or any other means of collecting money.

III. THE COLLECTION IS TO BE USED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES.

- A. Purpose One: Helping saints, who are in need. Consider the following examples.
 1. Acts 4:32-35
 2. Acts 6:1-4
 3. Acts 11:27-30
 4. Romans 15:25-31
 5. I Corinthians 16:1-4
 6. I Timothy 5:16
- B. Purpose Two: Supporting the preaching of the gospel.
 1. The church can support a local preacher. (I Corinthians 9:3-14)
 2. The church can support preachers in other areas. (II Corinthians 11:8-9; Philippians 4:14-20)
 3. We also use the money to provide a place where teaching can be done, to purchase teaching materials and supplies, and to use means of mass media to spread the gospel.
- C. Purpose Three: Supporting the edification of the saints. (Romans 14:19) The money is used to help supply the means and facilities for the saints to be edified.

IV. THE RULES FOR THE COLLECTION PROCESS.

- A. We must give of ourselves first to the Lord. (II Corinthians 8:5)
- B. We must give freely and willingly. (II Corinthians 8:3, 12)
- C. We must take the time to plan ahead for our giving. (II Corinthians 9:3-5,7; I Corinthians 16:1-4)
- D. We must give bountifully. (II Corinthians 9:6)
- E. We must give cheerfully. (II Corinthians 9:7)
- F. We lay by in store upon the first day of the week, as per example. There is only one example in the New Testament of a specific day when the saints collected money. We use that example to establish the time we lay by in store. That time is the first day of the week. (I Corinthians 16:1-2)

V. WITHOUT THE COLLECTION, THE WORK OF THE LORD WOULD GO UNFULFILLED.

- A. While the individual Christian can do a great deal towards fulfilling the work of the Lord, there are specific duties or responsibilities assigned to the local church. In order for these responsibilities, there must be money available. As has already been explained, the only authorized method for the local church to raise money is through a collection.
- B. When members of a local church do not give as they possibly can, some of the work will go unfinished.
 - 1. Our current weekly budget is \$1,200.00 a week.
 - a. This budget allows for the following:
 - (1) Utilities and upkeep of this meeting place.
 - (2) Materials and supplies for teaching and preaching.
 - (3) The supporting of the local preacher.
 - (4) Means of mass teaching, i.e., weekly radio program.
 - (5) Means of advertising, i.e., newspaper ads.
 - (6) Yearly lectureship and gospel meeting.
 - b. In order to meet the needs as laid out in this budget, of those who attend on a regular basis, each family needs to give \$43.00 a week. Now, some are able to give more, possibly \$50.00, \$60.00, \$70.00, or even \$80 dollars a week. Others may be financially limited and

can only give \$10.00, \$20.00, or \$30.00 and that is fine. However, to meet the needs established by the men in our budget, it is important that we meet our weekly budget.

- c. If we are all giving as we truly can, as we have prospered, then I strongly suspect that we will meet our budget plus some. This will enable to local church to meet the needs as established in God's word.

2. You have to ask yourself, what is most important in your life.

- a. To some people, the work of the church is not as important as other things within their lives, such as entertainment, extracurricular activities, sporting events, etc. This lack of importance given to the work of the church is generally first seen in their attendance. However, it may also be manifested in their giving.

- b. In your monthly budget, how are your priorities set up? (Many people appear to use the following layout.)

- (1) Food?
- (2) Housing?
- (3) Clothing?
- (4) Transportation?
- (5) Entertainment?
- (6) Schooling?
- (7) Medical?
- (8) Bills (credit cards and various loans)?
- (9) The work of the local church?

- c. Instead, our priorities should begin with the work of the local church because of the critical nature of the church's work. Consider the following suggestion.

- (1) The work of the local church - most important or (1).
- (2) Food - (2)
- (3) Housing - (3)
- (4) Clothing - (4)
- (5) Transportation - (5)

- (6) Medicals - (6)
 - (7) Schooling - (7)
 - (8) Bills (credit cards and various loans) - (8)
 - (9) Entertainment - (9)
- d. When the work of the local church takes last place in our list of priorities, the work of the local church will suffer.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Without the contribution of the saints, many needs would have gone unmet.
 - 1. Without the willingness and generosity of those saints at the beginning of the church, the saints in need would have gone hungry. There would have been no daily distribution. (Cf. Acts 6:1)
 - 2. Without the willingness of the brethren in Antioch, Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia, the saints in Judea would have suffered due to the great famine.
 - 3. Without the willingness of the brethren in Philippi, Macedonia, and other churches, the apostle Paul would not have had his needs met.
- B. Yes, your contribution is important.
 - 1. If all you can truly give is \$10.00 a week, then your \$10.00 is important.
 - 2. If all you can truly give is \$30.00 a week, then your \$30.00 is important.
 - 3. If all you can truly give is \$100.00 a week, then your \$100.00 is important.
- C. In the end, it is not how much you give that pleases God, it is your willingness and cheerfulness. (II Corinthians 9:7) Quite often, though, the amount we give is directly affected by our willingness and our cheerfulness. The less we are willing to give, the less we will work at giving.

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by John M. Duvall -- Lawton ,OK