

Collective Responsibility Acts 2:41-47

Helping The Needy

Benevolence is a part of our labor for the Lord

All understand that those (we) who have excess should help those in need
Certainly this is demonstrated in the teaching of Jesus - **Luke 10:30-37**

Paul - **Ephesians 4:28**

James - **James 2:14-17**

Responsibility to care for needy is not question

From what I can tell, there are, at least, three crucial components to the issue that helped foster the strong feelings. None of these are mutually exclusive, of course, but the emphases on these, without due balance and respect, might cause us to overlook one of the critical elements. These are:

1. Compassion and Love
2. Conviction and Biblical Authority
3. Getting the Work Done

All three of these components must be present if a local church is going to accomplish God's work in God's way. Succinctly, we might say it this way: With compassion and love, together with a proper respect for biblical authority, God desires for a local church to diligently work to evangelize, edify, worship, and provide for needy saints. - Doy Moyer -- Church Support Of Human Institutions (article addresses divisive attitudes of past)

Local Collective Obligations:

Uphold The Gospel - **1Timothy 3:14-15**

Preach, Teach - **1Thessalonians 1:8; 2Corinthians 11:8**

Edification - (to build up) - **Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12**

Supporting elders - **1Timothy 5:17-18**

Supporting preachers in field - Directly to preacher, not some other congregation to send to him, nor even to church for which he was then preaching - **Philippians 4:15-16**

Benevolence

First responsibility is laid upon individuals & family - **1Timothy 5:9-16**

Only limited circumstance when collective action was to take place

In every case, receivers of benevolent help from a congregation were saints, members of the church; Church sent help to needy congregations; poor saints were helped by the church

New converts remaining in Jerusalem for instruction - Individual saints with much gave to leaders for purpose of helping those in need - **Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37**

Needy among brethren in Jerusalem - Local Saints help with an ongoing need among the saints in Jerusalem required more attention than Apostles could give - **Acts 6:1-6**

Famine relief to Judea - Individual saints gave so that funds could be carried to elders in Judea for purpose of helping those in need - **Acts 11:27-30**

Relief to Judean saints from Gentile & Jew converts from Paul's ministry - **Romans 15:25-31; 1Corinthians 16:1-3; 2Corinthians 8-9**

Similar action to that recorded of brethren in Antioch in **Acts 11**, with relief made available from a greater area than just one group of saints

A Pattern Is Evident

Every example of relief offered by a collective of saints has the same characteristics.

Saints were the beneficiaries of the relief and it was sent to the leaders in the local collective for distribution. Receiving church was in want; need was physical; duration was temporary - **2Corinthians 8:13-15**

Absence of other instruction (statement, command, approved example, or necessary inference)
tells us the receivers of benevolence from the church were all believers or members.

No extra collection agency. No extra distribution agency.

That is a solid pattern

Anything else deviates from the pattern

Support of human organizations from treasury

Colleges, Hospitals, Home for Orphans, Widows, Unwed Mothers, Publishing Company

Many congregations sending to one congregation through which to preach the gospel, by TV,
Radio, or supporting preachers in field.

Such congregational activities have no scriptural authorization.

God's Way is The Right Way

The church is sufficient to do what God wants it to do

We do well to limit our action to following the examples God has preserved for our guidance.

This we know is right

"It's a good work" is not sufficient to override authority of Scripture

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