



THE CHURCH
TREASURY

DON'T AVOID THE TOPIC

- Is there authority in the New Testament for the church to take up a collection? If so, how is that money supposed to be used? Are there limits? Is there a clear distinction between the church's responsibilities and the individual's?
- First, it would be easy to dodge this topic by dismissing it as unimportant, nitpicky, or antiquated. But that doesn't do either side justice – and, more importantly, it just leads to the next generation of believers with no clear answers! Our young people deserve more than “That's just how we've always done it” or “The Bible says we can't.”
- But what about the fact that so little is written in the New Testament on this subject? Does it make a difference?



SCANT INFORMATION

REQUIRES MORE

CAREFUL CONCLUSIONS

THERE IS ENOUGH INFO TO ESTABLISH SOME FACTS

- FACT 1: God has granted you control of your resources. Your money is your money (Acts 5:4, Ecc. 5:19).
- FACT 2: There are many good and noble uses for money, such as providing for one's family (1 Tim. 5:8), acquiring food and shelter, supporting charities, recreating, etc. God understands that money is essential for individuals or families to do these things.
- FACT 3: To pay for apostolically approved collective works, the early Christians took some of their personal resources and donated them to the church's leadership (Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35).
- FACT 4: The early Christians were commanded to give as they had prospered, and only with the right motives (1 Tim. 6:17-19, Eph. 4:28, 2 Cor. 9:7, 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

THERE IS ENOUGH INFO TO ESTABLISH SOME FACTS

- FACT 5: Once money was given to the church, it was no longer the individual's. It was under the control of the leadership of the church (the apostles in the early days, and later the elders once they had been established). See Acts 11:30.
- FACT 6: The church had a standing treasury. Money, after all, needs to go somewhere. It was kept as a fund under the control of the church's leadership, distributed only after approval from the apostles and/or elders, and kept in waiting for needed activities (1 Cor. 16:2, the "list" of widows in 1 Tim. 5, daily resources available for food in Acts 6:1).
- FACT 7: There is a clear, consistent pattern in the New Testament for the use of these funds...

COLLECTIVE BENEVOLENCE

- Every New Testament example of church benevolence is FROM believers TO believers, without any institutional intermediary. If it is our goal to replicate New Testament Christianity, then all manmade institutions must be excluded from our collective funds.
- Acts 4:32-35, 11:29, 2:44-45, 6:1-8, 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 Corinthians 8:4, 9:1, Romans 15:25-26.
- 1 Timothy 5:3-10 explains the New Testament pattern for supporting widows from a collective treasury. These widows, first of all, are clearly members of the church. They also must meet certain qualifications related to age and marital status.

EVANGELISM

- Every congregation has an obligation to spread the gospel and continually equip and nurture its members (Eph. 4:11ff).
- This can be done through preaching, teaching, study material, visual aids, supporting online evangelism and teaching, etc. (Titus 2:1-8, 2:15, 1 Tim. 4:13ff, 2 Tim. 2:2, Acts 6:4).
- Local, autonomous churches sent and supported preachers (Acts 11:22, Phil. 4:15-18), collected funds (Acts 11:27-30), had control of funds collected (1 Cor. 16:3), and made sure they were sent DIRECTLY to the church or preacher in need (2 Cor. 11:8, Acts 11:30, Phil. 4:16).
- Preachers are allowed to make a living from their work, and may stay with a church for an indeterminate time (See 1 Cor. 9:14, Acts 20:31, 21:8).

THE COSTS OF BEING A CHURCH

- The New Testament is clear about the responsibilities of the church. It is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It is the body of the saved, reaching a lost world with the gospel. It operates on the local level as individual congregations under the watchful care of elders (1 Pet. 5:2ff).
- All of these activities come with incidental costs. It would be ridiculous to say the church was commanded to do her work without using its resources to make the work possible.
- Our building is used for edification (Heb. 10:24-25), which involves worship and Bible study; evangelism (1 Tim. 3:15), in activities such as preaching, teaching, and gospel meetings; and coordinating approved benevolence (1 Cor. 16:1-2).