

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Christian Giving

The New Testament church has a specific pattern that the saints must follow for giving. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed [commanded] the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come," (1Cor. 16: 1-2).

Few people deny the fund raising abuses that exist today. Churches take up repeated collections at any excuse. Also, leadership in some churches require that the members fill out contribution cards pledging a tithe [10% of their income] for the year even though a tithe is not commanded in the New Testament church. The New Testament commandment for giving is "Each one must do as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver," (2 Cor. 9:7).

Some churches have repeated bake sales, yard sales, car washes, and solicitations from non-members. Some preachers repetitively push members for increased giving with promises of wealth, assuring you that your contribution will be returned to you multiplied ten times or even a hundred times by God. God cared enough about the saints' practice of giving that He specified a certain way to do it. No other commands are given about church fund raising, so anyone who wants to return to the New Testament pattern today should adhere to the verses previously quoted.

This is why churches that are determined to follow the New Testament pattern do not take up collections every night of a gospel meeting or on Wednesday evening services. Occasionally, churches depart from the pattern of giving on the first day of the week because of needs that are "special" as determined by the leadership. An example of this would be a "missionary" that needs a special collection for their work abroad. The pattern is then ignored and an unscriptural precedent is given as the congregation takes up a "special" collection other than on the first day of the week.

If we are to restore the New Testament pattern of giving then evangelists and elders need to teach commitment of ourselves to God (2 Cor. 8:5). The teaching should also encourage brethren to give liberally (2 Cor. 9:13). This would be different from the frequent emphasis on church budgets or other financial matters.

If you appreciate the simplicity of the pattern of the contribution given by the commands of Paul and the rest of the apostles, and the church you attend does not follow those, then there are probably other areas where it has departed from the commandments. You need to give thorough consideration to the churches practice of giving, and measure it with the original pattern given in God's Word (Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim. 1:13).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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