

## SUPPORT OF FULL TIME CHRISTIAN WORKERS

### PASTORS

1. They are worthy of financial support: 1 Corinthians 9:7-18
  - a. Argument by analogy: the military pays its soldiers, the farmer eats of his crops, the shepherd drinks the milk of the sheep. Also, even the ox pulling the threshing sled was allowed to eat some of the crops, so it could keep on working. Why?
    - (1. "All hard work brings a profit..." Prov. 14:23.
    - (2. The Law of the Harvest--you reap as you sow: 2 Cor. 9:6, but contrary to the law, you do not necessarily reap the same *kind* of benefit. The Christian worker sows "spiritual seed," but is to reap "a material harvest" v. 11 (NIV).
    - (3. The Christian worker must have what is material to live, to continue to sow what is spiritual. Both are essential, and what is material is not to be despised. What is "material" is good, because God called His material creation "very good" (Gen. 1:31).
      - (a. Receiving money for spiritual work is right, because God is providing for the life of the pastor and any family he may have. Not providing for one's family, even for God's service, is a denial of the faith, making a Christian worker worse than an unbeliever, who may not know better (1 Tim. 5:8).
    - (4. The pastor and evangelist ("apostle"--one sent) has paid an opportunity cost, giving up the opportunity to earn financial support through other employment. He might be able to earn \$20.00 an hour, but spends his time preparing a Sunday message, visiting the sick, providing oversight, comforting the grieving, counseling the confused. He can only do this for so long without being enabled to continue to serve his people. This support should come *by* his people.
      - (a. "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor." Gal. 6:6. As someone has put it, you pay where you eat, not at some other restaurant. This also applies to those who *regularly* teach you God's Word by radio or television. You should also make such provision for those who fill the pulpit in the pastor's absence.
      - (b. The pastor is a male role ("the husband of but one wife" 1 Tim. 3:2).
    - (5. The "worker deserves his wages." (1 Tim. 5:18, NIV).
2. Exceptionally worthy pastors, "who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." (1 Tim. 5:17).

- a. How much should you pay your pastor? What does the average church member receive in income? What do those of a comparable educational level, size of church, section of the country, and years of experience earn?
- b. What is your pastor's budget? What are his needs? Sit down with him and determine those needs.
- c. According to one random survey about half of pastors don't ask for a raise and about thirty percent of pastors felt underpaid<sup>1</sup>. Does the church have an annual review policy to discuss the pastor's pay package?

Cautions:

1. False teachers are interested in exploiting you, and are characterized by greed (2 Pet. 2:2-3, 15), by pride (2 Pet. 2:9-10; Jude 10) and by immorality (2 Pet. 2:13-14; Jude 4). They devour the flock, rather than taking only what is needed for their needs and ministry.
2. We should *not* try to support Christian workers through getting *others* to support them, through sales of various kinds. They should live off the gifts of those they serve, just as the Levites did in the Old Testament. Theoretically, they should be able to be supported through ten tithing families.
3. We should not attempt to force people to give, or extort money from people. Giving should not be "under compulsion", but cheerful (2 Cor. 9:7).
  - a. We shouldn't keep passing the offering plate until we get what we think we should have.
  - b. We shouldn't make tithing a public matter, exalting the tither with special boxes located in front of the church. Giving should be done in secret, so that even our right hand would not know what the left was giving (Matt. 6:2-4).
4. Do not pay your pastor to give your church (you) a good image. Your ego should not be bound up in what your pastor drives or the kind of house in which he lives, or the clothes he wears, just as his should not be.

MISSIONARIES

1. We are to support the spread of the Gospel to all ethnic groups.
  - a. Christ gave all of us the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:18-20). Going into all the world costs money. Money is not evil; the *love* of money is the root of all sorts of evil (1 Tim. 6:10).
  - b. Acts 1:8 tells us to witness to Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. This does not mean that each level depends upon *everyone* being evangelized at the lower level, or we would never get to the higher levels. If we cannot personally go, then we can personally support those who do go.
2. We should send out those who are missionaries for the sake of the Name of Christ, "in a manner worthy of God." (3 John 1:5-8), because unbelievers cannot be expected to support them. Are they being sent out in a worthy manner worthy of an ambassador of God?

<sup>1</sup>Eric Reed, "Where the Money Goes," *Christianity Today*, Summer 2000, 21:3, p. 88  
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