



Blackfoot

Church of Christ

Published by Blackfoot Church of Christ
Blackfoot, ID

Volume 7 Number 48

December 1, 2019

Questions on Benevolence

Answers by Keith Sharp

My high school Bible class is studying church benevolence. Please answer the following questions about benevolence:

1. If a member of the local church is hurt and unable to work, is there authority for the local church to help him/her financially? (Please give yes or no answers and verses of scripture to prove your answer)
2. If a member of the local church has some accident or physical problem but is unable to pay for necessary medical help, is there authority for the local church to help him financially?
3. If a member of the local church wants to go to college but cannot afford it, is the local church authorized to pay his college tuition?
4. A group of Christians decide to help orphans by building and maintaining an orphan's home. Can they ask other Christians and non-Christians to fund their home?

Answers

These are excellent questions by your class, and they indicate the students are thoughtfully studying this important, biblical subject.

1. Yes. The New Testament passages dealing with the local church helping its own needy do not specify what caused the need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Acts 6:1-4 and 1 Timothy 5:3-16 deal specifically with widows, whereas Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; and 2 Corinthians chapters 8 - 9 deal with assisting other congregations to

relieve their needy. Being hurt and unable to work is certainly a justifiable reason for poverty. Neither the church nor individuals should assist someone who is lazy and unwilling to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

2. Yes. Again this is covered by the general authority of Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35. Medical help is a legitimate benevolent need (Matthew 25:34-45).

3. No. A college education is not a benevolent need (Matthew 25:34-45), and secular education is not the work of the church. The work of the church is limited to evangelism (1 Thessalonians 1:1,6-8), edification (Ephesians 4:11-16), and benevolence toward needy saints (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-4; 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians chapters 8 - 9 ; and 1 Timothy 5:3-16). These are all spiritual works, in harmony with the spiritual nature of the church (John 18:36; Romans 14:17). Benevolence toward needy saints is spiritual in that it is an expression of fellowship in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

4. Yes, but.... The care of orphans is certainly a benevolent need (James 1:27). The fact that one's "own" for whom he is responsible includes more than his own household (1 Timothy 5:8), implies that the responsibility for the care of orphaned children lies first and foremost with the extended family. For example, both my brother and I have four children. If he and his wife had been killed or had become destitute while our children were small, it would have been my responsibility to care for them. Had this been a greater burden than I could handle financially, the church could assist (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). The family is the divinely ordained relationship for raising children (Genesis 1:28; 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4). If there are orphans with no relatives to care for them, married Christians should adopt them (James 1:27). In this way they have a loving mother and father rather than being institutionalized.

It is possible for there to be so many orphans that families cannot take them in, although that is certainly not true in America. Uganda, the last I heard, has the highest per capita orphan rate in the world. In such a situation, where there is such a large percentage of orphans, and where

there is widespread, deep poverty, an institutional orphanage might be necessary. Since the Lord has not specified the organizational structure through which individuals may help the needy, it would be permissible for Christians to set up such a structure and for other individual Christians to assist. This would be parallel to individuals establishing a college to educate young people and other individuals assisting. Brethren may operate any legal, moral business (Acts 18:1-3; Colossians 4:14), they may operate a business as a joint venture (Acts 18:1-3), and they may incorporate their business to comply with civil law (1 Peter 2:13-14). Individual Christians may do many things the local church is not authorized to do (1 Timothy 5:16), and we may share in any thing that has the right to exist and to do the work it is doing (Galatians 4:18).

Comments by Ross Ward

There have been many questions about benevolent work a church is to participate in. These questions show the diversity of situations that might arise and warrant benevolence. Certainly, there are areas of subjection, like what constitutes a need. What satisfies that need. Question #4 brings up a good question about satisfying the needs of orphans. One of the points that is often overlooked is that orphans need parents: They need parents to teach them, to provide them with structure in their lives, to provide them with a loving caring supportive home. A 24/7 relationship. I do not agree that institutionalizing orphans provides them with their needs. Yes, an institution can provide food, shelter, clothing, and even an education, but it can never replace a loving Christian home. Let us always be aware of the needs of orphans and all who are in need. As we studied last week, we are to always be cheerful (2 Cor 9:6-7), or in that case eager and merry to provide these needs. On the occasion the need is one the church is authorized to provide for, then it is appropriate and necessary the church see to the need.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Porters will be traveling back from GA this week
- Sylvia Ward, Ross's Mom, undergoing in home rehab
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) cancer treatment
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines
- Worship Assignments for the month of December are posted on the bulletin board
- December's Men's meeting will be held next Sunday

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Worship Assignments

Today

Song Leader – Tom Mitchell

Lord's Table – Ben Palmer
– Larry Thompson

Wednesday

Song Leader – Tom Mitchell

Invitation – Chad Mitchell

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



[www.facebook.com @blackfootchurch](https://www.facebook.com/blackfootchurch)
www.blackfootchurch.com