

Acts Studies: The Compelling Witness of a Selfless Church

A Clear Evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in a Church Community

- “There was not a needy person among them”
 - Because they truly believed that they *belonged* to one another.
- They regarded *people* as more important than *things*.
 - They regarded *things* as resources to honor *people*.

What “Everything in Common” is *Not*

- Stopping work, taking vows of poverty, and forsaking all material possessions
- Communism, Socialism, or Cultish Commune practices
- Enabling a culture of chronic need, becoming a “toxic charity”

It is Good to Work, so that you might Generously Give

2nd Thessalonians 3:6 - 10

6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,

8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.

9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

Exodus 20:9 - 10

Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath...

Ephesians 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Boaz: An Example of Selfless Generosity

Note that Widowed Ruth was Given Work

Ruth 2:15 - 17

15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.



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Giving To Help the Poor Vs. Giving to Honor Christ

Matthew 26:6 - 13

6 Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,
7 a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

8 And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste?

9 For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”

10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me.

11 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

12 In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial.

13 Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Six Biblical Principles for Supporting the Needy in the Local Church

1. The local church must exercise discernment to ensure that we support those who are *truly* needy among us (1 **Timothy 5:3**).
2. If a brother or sister *is physically able* to work and support themselves, then they ought to work and provide for their own needs (**2nd Thessalonians 3:10-12**, **1st Timothy 5:8**, **1st Thessalonians 4:11**).
3. If *their own family* can support the needy brother or sister, then they should, and the church should not (**1st Timothy 5:3-4**).
4. Those whom the church supports financially ought to be those who are or have been those who've made *some return in service* to the church body (**1st Timothy 5:5, 10**).
5. It is right and wise for the church to *examine moral conduct* before giving financial support (**1st Timothy 5:9-13**).
6. The church's financial support should be to assist needy individuals in meeting the *necessities of life*, not far above and beyond (**1st Timothy 6:8**).

“In This Way We Must Help the Weak...”

Acts 20:32 – 35

32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me.

35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said,

‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

