

Clarksville Church of Christ
 407 W Lewis & Clark Pkwy
 Clarksville, IN 47129-1649
 (812) 944-2305
www.clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

Sundays
 Bible Study..... 9:30 AM
 Worship.....10:30 AM
 Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesdays
 Bible Study.....7:30 PM

Elders
 Stephen W. Nale.....812-948-9917
 Allen L. Morris.....812-967-4536

Deacons
 Jeffrey B. Hunt.....502-931-5766
 Elbert Metcalf.....812-246-5938
 Rondal O. Thompson Jr....812-944-8295
 Mark Maudlin.....502-523-0479

Editor
 Brian Anderson.....317-442-9507

Goals For 2021
Theme
 A Church with a Mind to Work
Attendance: Sunday Bible Study: 40;
Sunday AM: 50
Sunday PM: 40; Wednesday Bible Study: 30

Giving: Meet Our Yearly Budget

Invitations: 130

Every Member Committed To Daily Bible Reading

Every Member Committed To Daily Prayer

Every Member Committed To Be At Every Service

Support the Work in Vincennes, Indiana
Hold A Men's Training Class

Hold One Gospel Meeting

-Like us on Facebook-View us on YouTube at Clarksvillechurch

Brian Anderson will be preaching today.

We are now in week #44 of our Daily Bible Reading.

Prayer List
 Lynn Maudlin's father
 Pam Caudill
 Sharon Nale, Polly Ward
 Les & Novema Dunn
 Debby Spears (Roseann's sis)
 Sharon Thompson, Kay Thompson
 The Wards & Beth McFarland
 Dale Kahl, Brooke Thomas
 Cathie Hall, Debbie Lewellen
 Roseanne Denison, Mark Maudlin

Benevolence: Ps. 112:9, Prov. 14:31, Acts 11:29

Who Have You Invited To Services This week?

Lord's Supper Reading
 Hebrews 10: 4-10

Scripture Reading
 AM: See Preacher
 PM: See Preacher

Encouragement Tally
 Invites this month: 0
 Invites last month: 8
 Visitors YTD: 14

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**The
 Clarksville Beacon**

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Volume 33 Issue 44 Clarksville Church of Christ October 31, 2021

Church Benevolence

Welcome!
 If you're visiting with us today, we want you to feel welcome and we want you to feel like our honored guest! We also want you to know that all we're interested in here at the Clarksville Church of Christ is the Truth. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32. The truth He's talking about is God's word. Jesus said, "Sanctify them by thy truth, Thy word is truth." John 17:17. Therefore we hope you'll appreciate that we'll give you book, chapter and verse from the Bible, the word of God, for everything that we say or do here today, so that everything that we do may bring glory unto God, I Pet. 4:11.

There is no better way to teach the plan of salvation than examining the cases of conversion in the book of Acts. Such examples as the Jews on Pentecost, the Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and the Corinthians clearly reveal what one must do to be saved.

Similarly, the New Testament cases of local churches engaged in the work of benevolence show us how that duty ought to be performed, the proper recipients of welfare assistance from churches, how funds are raised for that purpose, and how churches may cooperate in relief work. Let us briefly examine New Testament instances that clearly depict churches at work in benevolence. **Jerusalem**

Early in its history the Jerusalem church gave attention to supplying what some lacked. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44,45). Jews had come to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven for the feast of Pentecost. Large numbers of them were converted to Christ. It is probable that many of them decided to stay longer than originally planned. The crowded conditions and prolonged stay generated the need for more provisions. There was a spirit of love, generosity, kindness, and willingness to share. Possessions and goods were voluntarily sold that needs might be met.

More details are given in Acts 4:32-37. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common... Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

Although they were many in number, the disciples who comprised the Jerusalem church were "of one heart and of one soul." They acted with one accord. Private property was not confiscated, nor the right of ownership denied. However, unselfish devotion led to sharing of earthly possessions.

This church was not at this time a commune, or a socialistic club, as many interpreters have fancied; for there was no uniform distribution of the property of all among the members; neither was the property of all held and administered by the apostles as a business committee. On the contrary, "distribution was made unto each as any one had need"; which shows that the needy received anything, and that those who were not needy were the givers...In reality this church was setting an example for all other churches in all time to come, by showing that true Christian benevolence requires that we shall not let our brethren in the church suffer for food, even if those of us who have houses and lands can prevent it only by the sale of our possessions

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The money raised for benevolence was "laid at the apostles' feet." Distribution from the common fund was under apostolic supervision. Not "one among them" [among the believers] lacked. ... They parted with whatever property was needful to supply the wants of their poor brethren ... They felt that they were members of one family, and they therefore imparted their property cheerfully to their brethren (Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles).

In Acts 6:1-6, a problem arose in the Jerusalem church pertaining to widows and their assistance. The number of the disciples was multiplied. The Grecians or Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews (Palestinian Jews) because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." Qualified men were to be selected whom the apostles would appoint over this business, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." The church was much too large for the apostles to personally supervise the daily service for the widows. Seven men were chosen by the whole multitude of the believers, they were put over this business, and the apostles were free to devote themselves to prayer and teaching.

It is worthy of note that the congregation at Jerusalem took care of its needy without establishing and maintaining an organization under a board of directors. The church attended to its own work. But one point to be emphasized is the Jerusalem church looked after the needs of its members. This was a good church; they had the inspired apostles for teachers, they worshiped as the apostles directed, they convened many to Christ, and they cared for their needy (R. L. Whiteside, Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons, 1942).

Antioch

The congregation at Antioch in Syria became a strong and influential church. Barnabas and Saul "taught much people" in that locality. We are informed in Acts 11:27-30 that prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch, and one named Agabus "signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Whether we understand "all the world" to mean the inhabited world, the Roman world, or the Jewish world (Palestine), the famine was to be great. The disciples in Antioch knew of the persecutions in Judea, crowded conditions, and other factors that would make the situation devastating in time of famine, so they sprang into action. They sent relief. The recipients were "the brethren which dwelt in Judea."

This illustrates how the church in one locality may assist needy brethren in other places. The relief was sent to the elders in Judea by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. There was no centralized agency and no outside organization. "The elders, being the rulers of the congregations, were the proper persons to receive the gifts, and to see to the proper distribution of them among the needy" (J. W. McGarvey, op. cit.). The disciples at Antioch had the same kind of generosity that was manifested earlier by the believers at Jerusalem. Here again we see a manifestation of the benevolent spirit of the early Christians, a demonstration of what a church can do in helping the needy. do such work (R. L. Whiteside, op. cit.).

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The gospel of Christ puts that sort of spirit into all who come under its influence. Every church of God is therefore a benevolent society, and Christians need no other society in which to do such work (R. L. Whiteside, op. cit.).

Widows Indeed

Along with the examples that have been noted, another matter that needs to be considered when studying church benevolence is the case of widows indeed (I Timothy 5:3-16). Paul instructed, "Honor widows that are widows indeed." They are to be honored with respect and material assistance. Any woman who has lost her husband through death is a widow. Not all widows are "widows indeed."

Paul explains that a "widow indeed" is one who has no relatives, such as children or grandchildren, to look after her. She is at least sixty years of age (too old to expect to remarry). She is a godly woman who is desolate. She is described as to character and conduct in verses 5 and 10.

A "widow indeed" may be "taken into the number" (KJV), or "put on the list" (NASB), or "enrolled" (ASV), or "put on the roll" (NEB). The Greek verb used only here in the New Testament means "to set down in an official list" (Robertson), or "to set down in a list or register" (Thayer). This refers to enrolling widows for having their physical needs supplied by the church. Paul says nothing about these widows being employed to do church work and receiving wages.

Verse 16 says, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." The subject of the whole discussion is relief. The first responsibility rests with individuals who have relatives that are widowed. They should provide for them that the church be not burdened. "Widows indeed" should be sustained, supported, and succored by the church. Incidentally, this verse emphatically and clearly distinguishes between individual obligations and what the church is obligated to do.

From the foregoing cases we conclude that the church can help any saint, or group of saints, that has a genuine need. Widows indeed are permanent charges of the church. (Due to insurance benefits, government and social welfare programs, etc., such widows are not numerous in our country today.) Nothing in these cases suggests that a congregation should go into all the world looking for needy people and support as many as possible. The church has a higher function than the social and temporal betterment of humanity. The church is not a glorified Rescue Mission for the world's indigent or a Red Cross kind of organization.

To keep the benevolent work of the church in its proper perspective we need to study and follow the New Testament, not what other religious bodies are doing.