

DO NOT LET THE CHURCH BE BURDENED

Introduction

- 1) **1 Timothy 5:16** – “do not let the church be burdened”
 - a) Context is concerning the honor and care of widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16)
- 2) There were younger widows, widows with families, and truly widows (left alone)
 - a) Younger widows are to marry, have children, and manage the house (vv. 11-15)
 - b) Widows with families are to be cared for by those families (vv. 4, 8, 16a)
 - c) The church is to provide care for truly widows “left alone” (vv. 3, 5-7, 9-10, 16b)
- 3) The church was ***not to be burdened*** with the care of widows that others had the responsibility to care for
 - a) Distinction between the individual Christian and church collective responsibilities and action
 - b) There were clearly areas in which the individual was to act so as to not burden the church
- 4) There are things men burden the local church with today that are not its work to do

I) Benevolent Care of Non-Saints

- A) The issue is not whether we are to care for those who are non-Christians, but whose responsibility is it – the individual Christian out of his/her own funds only or also the local church out of its collection/treasury
- B) This issue cannot be decided based on emotions, think-so’s, or tradition, but by the authority of God
 - 1) The church belongs to Jesus to direct and command its work, not to us (1 Cor. 4:17)
- C) The local church is authorized to provide benevolence to its own needy members and to other needy churches (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9)
 - 1) No divine authority for the local church to provide benevolent relief to non-saints
 - a) That good work is commanded of individual Christians (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27)
 - 2) Therefore, the local church collective is not to be burdened with this work

II) Political Activism

- A) The argument has been made that “whatever the individual can do, the church can do”
- B) If this is so, a local church can register with a political party and become involved in political activism in local, state, and federal government
 - 1) Political candidates could be asked to speak and debates could be sponsored by churches, along with sponsoring political rallies and drives; pulpits could be used to support certain candidates and issues in the name of getting votes
- C) Once again, there is no authority for a local church collectively to be active in politics
 - 1) An individual Christian can involve himself in this if desired, but the church is not to be burdened with such work (must seek to win souls to Christ, not votes for a candidate)

III) Social and Recreational Activities

- A) Many churches today busy themselves in the work of the “social gospel”
 - 1) This includes building and maintaining fellowship halls, family fun centers, and gymnasiums, wherein they sponsor ball teams, parties, and various social meals
- B) While we as individuals can choose to be involved in any godly form of recreational and social activity (Acts 2:46), does Jesus want His church to be burdened with providing this?
- C) Again, absolutely no authority is given for the church to be burdened with providing for the social and recreational activities of earthly human existence

Conclusion

Let the church do the work Christ gave for it in His word and not be burdened with any work beyond its authorized realm. The Lord’s work must be done according to the Lord’s way.