

## **The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy**

### Introduction:

- A. Quite often we are called “anti” and “orphan-haters.”
- B. We must avoid two extremes.
  - 1. acting without scriptural authority - 2 John 9
  - 2. failing to do what we ought - James 4:17
- C. What is the scriptural work of the local church in ministering to the needy?

### I. Background Principles

- A. We as individuals are obligated to help the worthy poor, whether they are Christians or not, to the extent of our ability and opportunity. - Matthew 5:43-48; Acts 20:35; James 1:27
- B. Even as individuals, we have special obligations:
  - 1. to our own families (1 Timothy 5:8) and
  - 2. to our brethren (Matthew 25:40).
- C. The local church is neither required nor allowed to do everything the individual is. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- D. When a local church uses its funds, it is an expression of fellowship in Christ. - 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
- E. To find the pattern for the work of the local church in ministering to the needy, we must examine every scripture dealing with the subject, obey them, but not go beyond them. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2; 2 John 9
- F. Our appeal must be to a “thus saith the Lord,” not to emotionalism. - Colossians 3:17; 2 Samuel 6:1-7

### II. The Pattern Revealed

- A. Acts 2:44-45
- B. Acts 4:32-35
- C. Acts 6:1-4
- D. Acts 11:27-30
- E. Romans 15:25-26
- F. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
- G. 2 Corinthians 8:4,13-15
- H. 2 Corinthians 9:1,12-13
- I. 1 Timothy 5:3,10,16

### III. The Pattern Applied

- A. The widow indeed was the only permanent charge of the church. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- B. The local church is limited in its work of ministering to the needy to the relief of needy saints.
  - 1. Its first obligation is to its own needy members. - Acts 4:34-35
  - 2. A local church with abundance may assist another local church which is unable to meet its local relief needs. - 2 Corinthians 8:13-15
- C. Relief of the needy is not “a means of evangelism.” - John 6:26-27
- D. It is not the work of the church to eliminate poverty, provide the world's medical needs, or eliminate the world's social ills. - John 12:8; Romans 14:17; 1 Timothy 3:14-15

#### Conclusion:

- A. This pattern establishes a responsibility which the local church must not shirk. - 2 Corinthians 8:24.
- B. But it is also an exclusive pattern we must neither change nor violate. - 2 John 9
- C. Let us abound in the work of the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 15:58