

Questions Regarding the Collection

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

We have a regular practice in the assembly of taking up a collection on the first day of the week. From time to time, it is good to evaluate WHY we do this and HOW we are doing it. Is this still a practice that the church needs to be doing today? As individuals, are we giving in a way that pleases God?

What Is the Collection?

- Near the end of his first letter to Corinth, Paul gave instructions regarding the collection (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) – this was money collected by the church from the individual members; it was also a standard practice among churches (1 Corinthians 16:1; cf. 4:17)
- This money was collected to enable the church to do its work – [more on this in a moment]
- This money was saved to eliminate the need for special collections – at least as much as possible

What Is the Collection For?

- It is to carry out the work of the church – more than just the one reason given by Paul (1 Corinthians 16:1, 3); this is the only method given in the NT for the church to raise money from its members; therefore, this collection would be used for the financial requirements of the church's work
- So what is the work of the church?
 - Evangelism (1 Timothy 3:15) – support preachers, print tracts, pay for radio time, etc.
 - Edification (Ephesians 4:16) – buy class material, pay for a meeting place, etc.
 - Benevolence (Acts 4:34-35) – support needy saints (as needed)

How Often Do We Do This?

- Many translations use the phrase, “On the first day of every week” (1 Corinthians 16:2) – some translations do not include the word “every,” but that is the thought that is being expressed
- Same as the instructions in the OT regarding the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8; 31:14-15) – God did not have to say “every” Sabbath, just “the” Sabbath; this included every week
- Every week has a first day, so that is when we “put aside and save” or “lay by him in store” (KJV)

How Much Are We to Give?

- Many immediately think of the “tithes” required in the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 14:22; Leviticus 27:30, 32) – they were required to give a tenth; however, the NT does not specify an amount or percentage; instead, the emphasis is on our attitude in giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)
- With the proper attitude, how do we decide how much to give? – “as he may prosper” (1 Corinthians 16:2); “as God has prospered him” (KJV); look back with gratitude and look forward with trust in God; “in keeping with your income” (NIV); income is a factor, but the idea is broader than that
- Factors to consider:
 - There must be a recognition of the blessings God has given us (James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:17)
 - There must also be a trust in God for future blessings (2 Corinthians 9:8, 10-11)
 - We also need to factor in our God-given responsibilities (Matthew 15:4-6; 1 Timothy 5:8, 16)
 - We must be good stewards, but also not worry so much that we give nothing (cf. Matthew 6:33-34)
- Ultimately, it is a personal decision – so we have no right to judge the amount that others give

Is This Required Today?

- Some say this was only practiced because of the need in Jerusalem – yet we still need to do this; the work of the church needs monetary support, and there is no other authorized way to collect funds
- That means it is still required for us individually to contribute (“each of you,” 1 Corinthians 16:2) – if we don’t give, we need to examine ourselves as to WHY (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5); the Macedonians gave abundantly because they first gave themselves to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:1-5); if we choose not to give, or neglect to give, can we say we have fully given ourselves to the Lord?

Conclusion

- The Lord has given His church work to do – this often requires some amount of monetary support
- The collection is the means of gathering funds for this work – as we give, we have fellowship in this work
- We need to examine ourselves to see if we are giving in a way that honors God