



Should We Collect Funds In A Treasury?

We have pointed out that local churches have financial obligations that they must fulfill. The local congregation that meets in this place is no different. We support preachers both locally and far off, provide and maintain a place for assembly, and offer assistance to Christians in need. Again, the question becomes, how are we going to take care of all of these financial needs?

The examples we read of in the New Testament consistently show local churches gathering funds for their needs. Individual Christians give to the church as they are able to give, and the elders of the church oversee and distribute these funds from a common treasury. Beyond this pattern, however, we can read how an inspired apostle instructed a local church to collect these funds. **“Now concerning the collection for the saints.... On the first day of every week each of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collection be made when I come”** (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This is a command that we can and should follow. By obeying these inspired words, we can be sure that this local church will always be ready to fulfill its financial obligations when needs arise.

Should a church have a treasury? Having diligently examined the inferences and examples found in the word of God, I hope that you agree that a church should absolutely have a treasury! It is the responsibility of each local church to collect and use funds for the glory of the Lord and His Kingdom!



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ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

November 23,
2014



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

Should a Church Have a Treasury?

By Andrew Dow

Have you ever wondered why we do the things we do? The Bible tells us to **“be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB). If our sincere aim is to be approved by God, then we must first know what it is that God desires. One doesn’t stumble into pleasing the Lord. To the contrary, pleasing God is the result of **“diligent”** work. The exemplary Bereans were **“noble-minded... for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so”** (Acts 17:11). Unfortunately, many people accept blindly the things their local church does. This mindset shows neither diligence nor eager examination of the Scriptures. The result of this mindset is weak Christians whose faith is easily shaken. May we always be studying God’s word!

It will be our goal in this article to challenge our thinking and examine the Scriptures regarding the treasury of the local church. Why do we have a church treasury? Is the church’s treasury authorized in Scripture? Is it an invention of men? These kinds of questions deserve answers, and those answers will be found by diligently examining the Scriptures.

The Church Has Financial Obligations

First things first, we must recognize that local churches have financial obligations. Many of these obligations are clearly stated in Scripture, others are inferred from what we find therein. Consider briefly a few of these obligations:

Local churches have the responsibility to support the preaching of the gospel. Although Paul didn't accept support from the Corinthians, he told them, **"...the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel"** (1 Corinthians 9:14). Paul later wrote the Corinthians saying, **"Did I**

commit a sin... because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you" (2 Corinthians 11:7-8). Paul saw the support of preachers as a responsibility of the local church.

Elsewhere in Scripture we find that, at times, **Local churches are to provide support for widows and overseers.** Concerning widows Paul wrote, **"Honor widows who are widows indeed"** (1 Timothy 5:3). In case anyone is confused in regards to what he is talking about here, Paul concludes by saying, **"If any woman who is a believer has dependant widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened"** (1 Timothy 5:16). Thus, Paul is saying that, unless a family member can do so, the local congregation must take on the burden of providing for a qualified widow. Concerning overseers Paul wrote, **"The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor.... For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'"** (1 Timothy 5:17-18). It is clear that under certain circumstances, a congregation is to provide for their own.

Additionally, we find examples of various **Local churches using funds to assist needy saints in their own congregations as well as in congregations abroad** (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; etc.). We also might consider commands such as, **"not forsaking our own assembling**

together" (Hebrews 10:25), from which we can infer that **A local congregation must have a place to assemble together** (whether that be a home, a tent, or a building maintained by the church). The conclusion is inescapable: The church has financial needs and obligations. Therefore, we must ask the question, *"how does the church pay for all of this?"*



Some Biblical Examples

The next step in answering our question—*should a church have a treasury?*—is to examine how local churches in the first century paid for all of their financial obligations. Let's note just two of these examples:

First, consider some situations that took place very near the inception of Christ's church. The second chapter of Acts records a day in which 3,000 souls from all over the known world were added to the church (Acts 2:9-11, 41). This wonderful display of salvation provided a unique and challenging situation for the church. These people who had traveled so far to come to Jerusalem were now miles from home and in need of financial assistance! Notice what happens: **"All those who had believed... had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need"** (Acts 2:44-45). Only a little while later we read, **"There was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet..."** (Acts 4:34-35). We see in these texts examples of individual members contributing to a collection of funds to be used for the church's needs. In the very next chapter we find the story of Ananias and Sapphira. After they lied about the amount they contributed to this collection, Peter said, **"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control?"** (Acts 5:4). This couple's possessions were in their control to do with it as they pleased until they gave them over into the church's collection. So, as we consider the earliest record of a church treasury, we see that individuals gave financially to the local church of which they were a part and, from those collected funds, the church fulfilled its financial obligations.

Another example will show us that local churches received financial support for needy saints. After a famine caused many Christians to be without food, the Scriptures tell us, **"In the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders"** (Acts 11:29-30). What is interesting about this situations is not who sent the money, so much as who received the money. The money was not sent directly to the needy individuals, but it was sent to the elders of a local congregation. Therefore, for at least some amount of time, the money was overseen by the elders in what we might refer to as a treasury. The money did not belong to the individuals who had given it to the elders, nor did the money yet belong to the needy saints who would soon receive it. Instead, it was in the possession of the local church to be dispersed as the need arose.