

BENEVOLENCE FUND POLICY

SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT:

The Book of Acts mentions the extraordinary love and unity among the first Christians. In Acts 2:44,45, we read:

“And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”

In Acts 4, these Christians continued their generous display of love and care for one another. Their care for the needy became so extensive that money and goods had to be brought directly to the apostles for effective distribution.

“And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them... For 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; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need” (Acts 4:32,34,35).

The believers’ remarkable love for one another continues to be evidenced in Acts 6, as seen in their efforts to minister to the widows:

“Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. And the Twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word’” (Acts 6:1-4).

The apostles were busy, and as the church began to grow in size and complexity, so did their work load. In order to relieve their expanding work load and to enable them to concentrate more of their efforts on prayer and the teaching of the Word, the apostles formed a new body of servants. These newly appointed officials were to give themselves to a ministry of deeds--to provide loving service to needy brothers and sisters in Christ.

Further support from scripture:

- Warning against greed - Lk 12:15
- Remember the poor - Gal 2:10
- Caring for the poor - Acts 20:34,35; 11:29,30
- Generosity of the Macedonian churches - 2 Cor 8:3
- Philippians praised for their giving - Phil 4:10,14-16

PURPOSE:

1. To provide for the collection, distribution, and proper management of the money and goods contributed to the needy.
2. To provide an opportunity for the church to be God’s channel of blessing to the needy.

3. To encourage a spirit of compassion and caring for the needy.
4. To teach the recipients to depend more on Him more fully as they trust God to provide for their needs.

REQUESTS FOR FUNDS:

1. Submit written or verbal requests to the pastors or church board members.
2. Requests for support must have the following information:
 - Name, address, and phone number of person(s) seeking assistance.
 - Brief summary of current financial status.
 - Statement of need. (Money, food, housing, prayer, counsel, etc.)
 - List of references with phone numbers.
3. Applicants will be advised to first seek financial support from their family and financial counseling may be suggested.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Primary focus is to assist Christians, specifically members and regular attendees of Fellowship Bible Church (Acts 2:44, 45; 4: 32-37; 6:1)
2. To show love and mercy to all in need, including non-Christians. (Luke 10:37; 1 Thes 3:12)

COLLECTION:

1. Collection for the benevolence fund will be taken quarterly.
2. All funds received for benevolence purposes shall be used so.
3. The church shall be encouraged to exercise impartial consideration of those desiring assistance, and to contribute to the benevolence fund with a view to help and meet the needs of all.

DISTRIBUTION:

1. The benevolence committee shall take under advisement any financial burden brought to their attention.
2. For any amount \$100 or less, funds may be given upon approval of the deacon of benevolence, the deacon of finance, and one of the pastors.
3. Gas and food vouchers, in \$5-10 allotments, may be distributed immediately upon completion of a Request Application, verification of need, and approval of either one of the pastors, the deacon of finance, or the deacon of benevolence.
4. For requests exceeding \$100, approval must be met by the Church Board.
5. Determination of support shall be based on need and availability of funds.
6. Checks distributed will be designated for a specific purpose (e.g. rent, gas) and so noted on the check.
7. The deacon of benevolence will be responsible to the church as to the allocation of funds, however, the names and specific details of each case will be held confidential.