

The Structure of the Ministry

So God imposed a specific structure on His work which is the local church. It is not correct that the minister of God should have to work a secular job in order to have his daily bread. There will always be economic needs in the ministry, like salaries, purchasing or renting of a meeting place, and other expenses for the ministry like literature, Bibles, hymnals, and even money for charity for the needy or sick members of the church. Even though the church may meet in a house, the ministers work for free, and everybody buys their own Bible and hymnal, this is just not the right way "to do church".

The problem is that it appears as though God is a pauper and cannot pay for a real representation of God's house on earth. This is not how God does things, working with scraps and begging. King David made the observation in **2Sam 7:2**, "*See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.*" Even though it is very cheap to meet in house, **it is not worthy of the Creator of the Universe, that He has to ask a place loaned to him.** That kind of thing is fine for a start up of a new church, but if the members own their own houses and businesses, why cannot they also buy something for God? Is God not worthy of that? Is it incorrect for God to have dedicated full-time ministers to well prepare and serve? **Hag 1:4** *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

Where does the money go anyway?

God has his work, which is the salvation of souls, and the disciplining or teaching of new Christians to become mature Christians who effectively do the work of God (the ministry). All this revolves around **the local church as the ONLY divinely approved instrument or means of doing the work of God.** The work of God was never done without money. Covetousness and avarice are grave sins which both the church ministers and members are to reject and fight against.

God teaches us to fight against these sins by sacrificing and giving to Him. The money raised from tithes and offerings should be immediately inverted back into that very same ministry. What the Bible shows by example is that **the priorities for this investment are** (1) the just salary of the church's ministers **1Ti 5:18** (2) the missionary ministries of church (again a just salary) **Phil 4:15** (3) needy brethren within that very same church. **Rom 15:26** extends this to at times brethren suffering in other churches. (4) the general economic needs of the local church.

The Defense of these Expenses

When a church wants to make a church budget to guide them in how they spend their money, they never seem to want to look into the Bible to guide them by the examples we find there! There is a very strong example that the ministers should receive a just salary. See my **Tract Ch23 Paying the Pastor** at www.coxtracts.com For example in **1Cor 9:9-14** and **Gal 6:6**, Paul argues that ministers should receive a just payment for their labors. This is based on passages such as **Mat. 10:10**; **Luke 10:7**; and **1Tim 5:17-18** which plant the same idea. Ministers should not have to work without pay, as if God could not provide for the sustenance of his workers. So the principle is that a minister should like of what he works (1Cor 9:14). Also we see churches giving donations to Paul the missionary. We would define a biblical missionary as being somebody who goes out of his home area to make the Gospel known (evangelism), and to organize the converts into a local church. A person is not a missionary if that person doesn't explain or spread the Gospel, and the end goal is to ground these converts into a new local church. Actually we do not find verses speaking of churches spending money on a building, or renting, or utilities, even though it would appear that these early churches had their own buildings in some cases. The focus of the NT is that churches spent their income on the work of God, in persons and ministers. Nor were there "ministries", but individual people who had a specific ministry. When the minister died, that ministry ended and

donations ceased. Perhaps they supported his widow until she died, but no more. The support was not passed on to his second in command. Every minister was considered separately.

Ministerial Requirement: Not Greedy

God has placed the requirement that all of His ministers must have a "*good report of them which are without*" **1Tim 3:7** and that they should be blameless (irrepressible) in their personal life **1Tim 3:2**. This is considering individually, and it is invalid to use a "front man" with a good testimony to validate and hide one who is not. "Wolves" use good people as their representatives as shield to protect and hide their evil life, but steal take money from the people of God. Every minister should be individually considered. The Bible does not speak of religious "organizations" only churches and individuals. In the NT, there were no organizations (apart from churches), neither did they send representatives around dedicated to raising funds. The minister with his eyes on money was automatically disqualified for the ministry, and any one who supported him was sinning. If we just go back to the Bible, the requirements for a minister are clear: **1Tim 3:3** "*not greedy of filthy lucre*", **Titus 1:7** "*not given to filthy lucre*" **Titus 1:11** "*teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*" **1Pe 5:2** "*not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*". So neither the minister nor the church should be overly worried about money. Ministries which are not local churches are designed to gather money, without obedience to the divine commands about rejecting this wicked character. All these unbiblical ministries of today have owners that pocket their profits. No church in the Bible ever had any owner except God. When a leader of a NT church died, the organization found a new leader, and the assets stayed with the ministry, and not the leader's children or widow. The structure of a church is totally opposite of what are Christian ministries today (individual possessions). The lay people of a church owned its properties corporately, and there were not any other "owners" except God. We see

no board of directors of any NT church, only the organized government as seen in the Bible.

There also was no high pressured money raising. The good minister offers an opportunity for the people to give to him through the church, but the modern tactics of squeezing people for money were not heard of except in the case of false prophets. There were no major pitches for money or fund raising. All of this is just covetousness cloaked under disguises. When this happens, then neither the minister nor the church is free from the accusation of covetousness. We have to insist that all the ministers of God have to live by **the principle of spiritually clean from greed and riches as their goal and priority in life. Luke 14:33** *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.* The minister that doesn't order his life under this no-greed principle is disqualified from the ministry, and nobody should give him anything. God's ministers are men that *"fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness"* **Exod 18:21**, men that *"have an eye for riches"*. Paul set this example when he said *"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."* **Acts 20:33** The man of God is somebody that *"love of money... flees these things"* Obedient Christians should limit their giving to churches, missionaries, and individual ministers in these two groups that visibly live the healthy doctrine and have good testimonies.

False Prophets always go for the money

Evil ministers are people who use *"flattering words (as)... a cloke of covetousness"* **1Thess 2:5** God has placed a control on His Work (the ministry) that keeps us from false prophets. This is public renouncing of "lucre" for every minister and ministry. If the people of God would only abide by this simple principle, then the majority of the false prophets would go broke, and end. If we examine different ministries such as Christian schools, camps, radio stations, book publishers, etc. using this "for profit" pattern, they all work outside of these principles that

God has established. They all charge for what they do as "ministry" and then they turn around and want to be considered as missionaries again getting more money. Years in the ministry has made many individuals multi-millionaires. When they die (or leave the position of sound doctrine), this money raised by God's people is taken with them. There is no way to get it back from them for the ministry. In the case of a well-established local church, all the money given over decades stays in that local forever, and the faithful brethren there defend its doctrine, and the use of those assets for the work of God. The threat for a church is false prophet entering into the church driving off the people and taking the money. Before God, you are responsible where you put your entrusted part of God's money. Don't get me wrong. Ministers should be well paid. But they should not make millions off of God's people.

Everything Free!

Matt 10:8 *...freely ye have received, freely give.* God has wisely structured the church. Everything free for all, but the mature ones pay for everything. The immature ones and the unsaved enter the church, and enjoy the doctrine and ministry that the church provides, and there is no type of charge. When they accept the Lord and grow spiritually, they understand their obligation and part in providing this, and they realize that God will reward them for their sacrifices in heaven. Paul, as a missionary, explains why he receives gifts, *"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."* **Phil 4:17** So the conditioning of giving religious service on first people paying is to corrupt the ministry of God.

Why we don't charge for ministering

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Matt 10:8 *freely ye have received, freely give.*

Part of the instructions that Jesus gave his disciples was to not put the Gospel or ministering on a give-if-you-pay basis. Serving if somebody pays, and not if they don't is to commercialize the ministry. The principle behind this phrase, *"freely ye have received, freely give."* is that everything we do in the ministry for God should be free, and should be given irrespective of financial giving by who gets the benefit of that works. God designed the ministry in such a way that the spiritually mature brethren pay for things, they teach the financial obligation to give to the spiritually immature, but leave giving as a free-will activity free of coercion or pressure. What cannot be done that way, should not be done at all.

We should seek our reward from God in heaven. When a people are unthankful, and finances don't come in to support something, it should be stopped.