

The Work and Worship of the Church.

We learned last week that the church had a responsibility for evangelism.

Eph 4:11-12 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

How is this work to be carried out?

Mat 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Are there any restrictions on the command to "go"?

In our search for Biblical authority, there is no question that each individual Christian has this command.

Go
make disciples
baptize them
teach
observe all things I commanded.

Jesus was speaking to the 11 just before his ascension. The command was to them and to each baptized disciple

Act 13:2-3 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (3) Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

There is no instruction on how they should go, where they should go, but when they left, they went to preach.

Act 13:4-5 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. (5) When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper.

But who paid for the trip? Paul and Barnabas could have, but the church at Antioch “sent them.”

1Co 9:14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

On his third missionary journey, the church at Philippi helped.

Php 4:15-16 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

The way Paul says, *no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone* would indicate that it was the custom of churches to help the missionaries, but on this trip only Philippi had done so.

The reason for the churches not sending a gift is not stated, but Paul appreciated the brethren at Philippi.

Php 4:18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Paul certainly chastised the church in Corinth for not sending him support in his 3rd missionary journey.

1Co 9:4-6 Do we not have a right to eat and drink?
(5) Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? (6) Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

The church in the US had a great division over the method of promoting evangelism in the period of 1850-1900. Alexander Campbell had served as the President of the American Christian Missionary Society. But David Lipscomb and others studied the matter from the standpoint of the Scriptures. Using the same Scriptures as those concerning whether the elders should oversee a congregation other than a local one, Lipscomb determined that the elders of one church did not have the right to oversee the work of any other church. Lipscomb also came to the conclusion that the use of a Society replaced the church in God's plan and fought against it with all his might.

No outside group is ever authorized by God to do the work of the church.

Some might say, “It’s simply Christians banding together to do the work.”

Christians are allowed to work together, but that is not the work of the church.

Paul and Barnabas did not say they were the church at Antioch, but the church at Antioch sent them out.

Acts 13.3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

They = the church at Antioch!

The American Christian Missionary Society was formed by churches to pool their funds and support missionaries.

Churches did not pool their funds but sent directly to where the need was.

Phil 4.15 no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone

The church sent to Paul – not to the mother church in Jerusalem (or Rome), but to Paul.

The elders of one church do not have the right to “oversee” the work of another.

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1Pe 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

Churches did use messengers to get money to places where it was needed.

2Co 8:18-20 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; (19) and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, (20) taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

The churches sent funds and those funds were accounted for each churches messenger.

2Co 8:22-23 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. (23) As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

Each church is to do its own work as God has blessed them.

2Co 8:3-6 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, (4) begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, (5) and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. (6) So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

We are truly blessed to be able to carry out the support of so many gospel preachers.

Your offerings are seen as *a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.*

There are those who gather with us from time to time who recognize the good that we do in honor to God.

Act 10:1-2 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, (2) a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

And yet they, like Cornelius, are not pleasing to God since they are in sin just as Cornelius was.

Act 11:14 and he [Peter] will speak words to you [Cornelius] by which you [Cornelius] will be saved, you and all your household.'

Have you heard the word by which you can be saved?

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Mar 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16" He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.