

Work of the Church: Benevolence

Lesson 13

Texts from Acts

- Early efforts at Benevolence (2:44-45)
- Ministrations directed by Apostles (4:32-37)
- Daily Distribution to Widows (6:1-7)
- Famine in Judea (11:27-30)

Primary Work of Benevolence is an Individual Responsibility

- Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- Exhortations to the Individual (James 1:27; Galatians 6:6-10)
- Church's responsibility is limited (1 Timothy 5:8-16)
 - Not all widows were to be put on the roll (vs. 9)
 - Primary responsibility is familial (vs. 16)

Summary Points

- The church has a responsibility to saints during emergency and disaster (cf., Judean famine).
- The church has an ongoing responsibility to "widows indeed" (cf. 1 Timothy 5:16). Note: ongoing benevolence can lead to sin (cf. vss. 11-13).
- The exclusive New Testament pattern with regard to congregational responsibility in the area of benevolence is limited to saints only.
- Church is to take care of these obligations itself (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-ff); there is no authority to create a human institution (orphans' or widows' home) under the authority of an eldership, nor to send money to such an institution from the treasury of the local church.
- With regard to the work of the local church, we must respect the authority of God's word, and limit ourselves to its teachings and examples.

Student Notes: