

Question: Do you have raffles, bake sales and rummage sales to support your church?

There may be several legitimate ways of raising funds to support the work of civic groups and social organizations, but the Lord's church is of a different order than these. She is a spiritual institution, and operates on a different level. She is the bride of Christ and subject to Christ in everything (*Ep 1:22; 5:24*). As we have pointed out in previous articles, being subject to Christ entails respectfully submitting to the teaching and example of His apostles. Since there are no examples of New Testament churches raising funds in the ways stated above, neither do we.

The Holy Spirit has revealed, through the apostles, that the work of the church falls into three categories:

1. Evangelism — spreading the gospel.
2. Edification — building up the members through teaching the Word.
3. Benevolence — meeting the needs of the saints locally and abroad. (*Mt 28:10-20; Ac 8:4; Ph 4:15-16*). (*Ac 20:32; Ep 4:11-12*). (*Ac 6; Ro 15:26*).

There are occasions when funding is needed to accomplish this work. How, then, should those funds be raised? Let's begin by talking about the individual Christian. When one becomes a Christian, they have the duty of assuming a part in the financing of the Lord's work. An important passage along these lines is in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church. "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come*" (*1Co 16:1-2*).

Although this passage is specific about the purpose of the contribution, i.e., "*the collection for the saints*," it also clearly outlines several important facts about **how** to raise money for the work of the church:

- Regularly, "*on the first day of the week*"
- Individually, "*let each one of you lay something aside*"
- Proportionately, "*as he may prosper*"
- Preventatively, "*that there be no collections when I come*" (put it together in one place, bj)

In addition, several other passages speak of the **manner** in which this money or these goods are to be given:

- Liberally and cheerfully, "*he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully...for God loves a cheerful giver*" (*2Co 9:6-7*).
- Purposefully, "*so let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity*"
- Sacrificially, "*the churches of Macedonia...were freely willing...beyond their ability*" to take up a collection for the saints. (*2Co 8:1-5*)

Yard sales work fine as a way to raise extra money for the family. Rummage and bake sales, etc., give many social groups some financial "breathing room." Yet, the only method of fundraising prescribed for the Lord's church is the voluntary contribution of its members on the first day of the week, and, by the way, for the reasons 1, 2 and 3 stated above. Thanks for reading. See you next week. -- C. Boyd Jennings