

IS PAYING THE PASTOR BIBLICAL?

Fill in the Blank Bible Study
By Joe Keim

Introduction

First, we are going to look at God's pattern for supporting full-time ministers in the Old Testament. We will see that God's law was very specific in this matter and leaves little room for doubt.

Second, we will study the New Testament to see what kind of pattern God has given the church concerning pastors, teachers, missionaries, and other full-time ministers today.

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was divided into twelve tribes. According to God's plan, the Tribe of Levi was set apart to minister full time to the other tribes.

Today we will study how God provided for the priests and Levites, and how the church should care for those who labor in ministry today.

OLD TESTAMENT

Numbers 18:20-24

God Said: Support the Priests and Levites

1. What did the Levites receive for their inheritance (v-21)?

2. Why did the Levites have no inheritance among the Israelites (v-23)?

Read 2 Chronicles 31:4-10

3. How did King Hezekiah make sure the priests and Levites had time to properly do their ministry (v-4)?

4. How did the people respond when Hezekiah called on them to bring support for the priests?

☐ Grudgingly ☐ Cheerfully

5. How did Hezekiah and the officials respond to the generosity of the people (v-8)?

6. What did the chief priest tell Hezekiah about the abundance that had been brought in (v-9-10)?

Get It

7. Why is it important to praise God when His people give generously?

8. How have you shown appreciation toward those who minister to you?

9. Do you think those who minister to you feel appreciated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Malachi 3:8-10

God Warns Those Who Refuse to Give

10. What had the people robbed God of (v-8)?

11. What were the consequences for robbing God (v-9)?

12. What did God promise those who obeyed Him in giving (v-10)?

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Take Care of Those in Full-Time Ministry

1. Who was the result of Paul's labor in the Lord (v-1)?

2. Who was the living proof ("seal") that Paul had been called by God (v-2)?

Many of the Corinthians had been led to Christ through Paul's ministry. Their changed lives were proof that God had truly called him.

Paul now explains why ministers have the right to financial support from the church.

The Minister Has the Right to Be Supported

Paul gives several examples showing why churches should care for their ministers.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

- The right to be fed (v-4). The minister and his family have to eat; therefore, it is the church's duty to provide food for their ministers.
- The right to receive travel support (v-5). The ministers of Paul's day were always traveling about ministering among a number of churches. Ministers of every generation have had travel expenses; therefore, it is the responsibility of the churches to provide the travel expenses. Note two things.
 - The apostles and other ministers took their families with them as they traveled about ministering. This seems to indicate that most of them were married.
 - The reference to the "brothers of the Lord" is a strong testimony to the deity of Christ. His own half-brothers who had lived with him day by day became followers and ministers after His resurrection (cp. Matthew 13:55-56).
- The right to receive enough income that he can minister full time (v-6). Paul says that he and Barnabas worked and earned their own living while ministering in Corinth. But they had the right to be supported by the church.
- The supportive arguments. Note how clearly the issue is illustrated and seen in these arguments. The church is unquestionably responsible for the support of its ministers.

- The soldier's right (v-7): What soldier goes to war at his own expense? The minister is a soldier of Christ. He is leading the people of God in their spiritual warfare. He is, therefore, to be supported by those who engage him to lead the battle.
- The farmer's right (v-7): What farmer plants his vineyard and does not eat of the fruit? The minister is a farmer who sows the seed of the Word of God. He plants and harvests the fruit for the Lord and for the church. Therefore, the church is to see that he reaps of the harvest and eats of the fruit.
- The shepherd's right (v-7): What shepherd feeds a flock and does not eat of the milk of the flock? The minister is the shepherd of God's flock and feeds God's flock; therefore, he is to be fed and supported by the flock.
- The law or Word of God says this right belongs to a minister (v-8). Paul says he does not have to speak as a man using human illustrations to prove his point. The Word of God says the same thing:

—Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible – Commentary

3. God said in the Law of Moses, *“Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn”*. Paul brings it up again in (I Cor 9:9) when he is talking about taking care of the minister. What does this statement from the Old Testament law and Paul’s message mean?

(See Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:9)

4. According to verses 13-14, who should support those who preach the gospel?

5. Who commands that gospel ministers should be supported?

Get It

6. Have you asked your pastor and his family about their needs lately? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Are you helping support your pastor and his family financially? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. When was the last time you encouraged your pastor or his family with kind words?

9. How well do you support your pastor through faithfulness and church involvement?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor

10. How well do you support your Sunday school teacher?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor

Have you thanked him or her lately for studying and preparing lessons? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Does your Sunday school teacher know that you appreciate his or her Bible teaching? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. If your church supports missionaries, are you personally involved through:

a. Giving?	☐ Yes	☐ No
b. Communication?	☐ Yes	☐ No
c. Prayer?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Read 1 Timothy 5:17-18

13. According to these verses, what is a pastor or elder worthy of if he rules well?

14. Why should elders and pastors receive support (v-18)?

Galatians 6:6-7

The Responsibility of the Learner

Galatians 6:6-7

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

What Does It Mean to Support a Teacher?

Supporting a teacher means more than giving money.

It also means:

- being faithful to attend,
- listening carefully,
- learning the Word,
- encouraging the teacher,
- praying for the teacher,
- helping in ministry,
- and sharing what you have learned with others.

A Bible teacher has a responsibility to teach God's Word faithfully. In the same way, the learner has a responsibility to appreciate and support those who teach the Word of God.

Think About It

15. What are some ways believers can support and encourage their pastors and Bible teachers?

16. Why is it important to sit under teachers who faithfully teach the Word of God?

17. According to Galatians 6:7, what happens when people reject or mock God's servants?

Final Thoughts

God has always cared for those who dedicate their lives to ministry.

In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to support the priests and Levites.

In the New Testament, God teaches the church to support pastors, missionaries, elders, and teachers who faithfully labor in the gospel.

Supporting those who minister is not merely about money. It also includes:

- encouragement,
- prayer,

- kindness,
- faithfulness,
- participation,
- and appreciation.

When we support those who faithfully teach God's Word, we are honoring the Lord Himself.

Key Scripture

1 Corinthians 9:14 *"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."*

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