

PROVIDING FOR THE POOR



1. God commands that the covenant community provide for the basic needs of those who are poor among us (Deu 15:4, 11; Act 4:34; Pro 14:21, 31, 19:17, 28:8; Psa 37:26, 112:5).

2. God has established a third of the tithe tax and gleanings (from surplus) as the primary means and only mandatory requirements placed upon God's people in fulfilling their obligation to care for the poor (Lev 27:30-34 w/Num 18:24 w/Deu 14:28-29; Lev 19:9-10, 23:22; Deu 24:19-22; Ruth 2:1-7 = Notice the sq ft reserved for gleanings as well as who can participate is left to the sole discretion of each individual – see Mat 20:15; e.g. church pantry where people contribute free meat, clothing and personal hygiene or cleaning supplies). As such:

2.1. Any other burden (including the manipulative forms of coercion often employed in churches today) placed upon the people of God as necessary to the care of the poor is theft (e.g. "the question is not how much does God require, but how much am I willing to keep for myself?"; Exo 20:15 w/ Pro 6:30-31)

2.2. God protects the rights of private property (i.e. our possessions minus tithe and gleanings; Mat 20:15; Act 5:4)

2.3. Our P434 budget for monetary support of the poor cannot exceed 33% of the total tithe (Deu 14:28-29)

2.4. The poor (like all God's people) must pay the tithe tax as necessary to their membership in God's provisional insurance plan (Gen 28:20-22).

3. The purpose of caring for the poor is not the removal of their poverty but the deficit they experience in relation to basic needs (Deu 15:11). As such:

3.1. The bible condemns socialism [private property is not protected; personal wealth building is discouraged; wealth equality for the masses] and promotes capitalism [private property is protected; personal wealth building is encouraged as long as it is wise and godly; wealth is distributed based on voluntary agreement in a free, competitive market] (Exo 20:17; Mat 20:15; Ecc 5:10, 7:12, 10:19; Pro 24:3-4; Pro 23:4 w/1Ti 6:9-10, 17-19)

3.2. God has not determined that all His people should live at the same economic level or with the same temporal blessings (e.g. Pro 22:2; Ecc 5:19).

4. The poor are those who cannot provide for basic needs (1Ti 6:8 = Literally, nourishment and covering; staple foods, simple, sufficient clothing and shelter) yet:

4.1. Are working as many jobs or hours as physically possible without discretion as to the type of work or detriment to other God-given obligations (Ecc 11:1-6; 2Th 3:6-12)

4.2. Are attempting to improve their income level through the pursuit or possession of skilled labor in a respectable field or industry (1Th 4:11-12; Pro 22:29)

4.3. Have exhausted the value of all available, non-essential personal assets or services through their sale/liquidation, cancellation or use as collateral (e.g. investments, real estate, savings accounts, retirement accounts, automobiles, recreational vehicles, stereos, televisions, other entertainment systems, jewelry, collector memorabilia, stamps or coins, livestock, etc; Lev 25:25; Exo 22:26; Deu 24:10-13)

4.4. Have exhausted other possible options of non-interest bearing support and are still in need (e.g. support from other family members working – 1Ti 5:1-16)

4.5. Are obedient to God's command to spend responsibly (Phi 4:10-13 w/Lev 27:30-33 w/1Ti 6:8 = Tithe, then basic needs, then everything else).

"Biblical charity...never subsidizes irresponsibility" – David Chilton (*Productive Christians In An Age Of Guilt Manipulators*)

5. Those who are not working as required by God must demonstrate repentance (Mat 3:8-10; Act 26:20) and commit to such actions before support is considered (2Th 3:10 w/13-15; Isa 26:9-10)

6. Those who are not spending as required by God must demonstrate repentance (Mat 3:8-10; Act 26:20) and commit to such actions before support is considered (Gen 28:20-22) = Since tithing is the equivalent of paying into God's insurance plan, when individuals default on their tithe, there is equally a lapse in their policy which can forfeit God's provision. A covenant member shall be considered in default if:

6.1. A period of two months has passed since they tithed while employed

(AND/OR)

6.2. All prior tithe debt and penalties are not resolved by the end of each year.

7. Unless otherwise explicitly stated, all monies provided to the poor in the covenant community shall be considered loans:

7.1. With a repayment schedule of no longer than 6 years according to what they can afford (Deu 15:7-11)

7.2. Which bear no interest as long as the recipients remain in good standing with the covenant community for 6 years after receiving the loan (Exo 22:25; Lev 25:36-37; Deu 15:7-11 w/23:19-20)

8. Those covenant members who lose their good standing with the covenant community either through excommunication or apostasy, before the 6 years after receiving a loan, shall be responsible for paying:

8.1. The entire balance of their loan still outstanding plus interest (30% on the remaining portion) (Deu 23:20)

8.2. All attorney costs necessary to enforce the terms of the loan should litigation be necessary.

9. Unless otherwise explicitly stated, all loans will require a signed promissory note agreeing to the stated terms of this document.