

How Should I Give?

by Wayne Goff

Every first day of the week, Christians meet together at their local congregation to worship God. One of two acts of worship commanded to be observed on the Lord's Day is "**giving.**" By this we refer to the Lord's instructions as to how the church is to raise its funds for operation. Someone before me arranged the points of proper giving by noting that each aspect could be defined with a word beginning with the letter "P."

Periodic Giving

*"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"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). Giving by Christians to the local church should be done on a weekly basis. The original Greek in this text reads "**every first day of the week**" (**Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 3, p. 288**). If we miss worshiping on the Lord's Day, that does not relieve us of our responsibility to give for that week. Why? As we will see, giving is to be based upon my prospering that week, and that cannot be ignored.

Personal Giving

*"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"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). A Christian's service is always a personal responsibility, Luke 12:48. It matters not **who** drops the money into the plate; the *personal sacrifice* is what counts. The greater one's faith, the greater his desire to fulfill all his responsibilities! Deep poverty did not prevent some from giving to the Cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)!

Proportionate Giving

*"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"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). The weekly giving of each Christian is based upon what he has made during the past week. Some make quite a lot; others make very little. God understands this, but still expects each one of us to give based upon our ability. *"But now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. **For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have**"* (2 Corinthians 8:11-12). Remember that Jesus commended a very poor widow who gave only "two mites," but it was all that she had (Mark 12:40-44)! He explained that she gave more than all the others because of her personal sacrifice. God expects us to do all things toward Him *according to our ability* (1 Peter 4:11).

Preventive Giving

*"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**"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). To "*lay something aside*" means to put the money into the treasury of the local church. This is understood by the language of the context. But notice also that when we give **as we have been prospered**, then we have done all that we can do! Some brethren give based upon the perceived needs of the local church, and as a result you hear about "special contributions." But when every member gives every week as they have prospered, then those funds are to be used for the work of the church — evangelism, edification and benevolence.

Brethren, be careful that you do not "*rob God*" (see Malachi 3:8) by failing to obey the command of our Lord Jesus to give to His church on the first day of every week, in the way He has commanded that we give! Only by this means can the local church do the work God intended for it to do.

