

**April 3, 2017**

**Question:** My question this time is about groups in a congregation. Some brethren prefer having what is called church working groups mainly involving women and youths. These groups have their own leaders and funds collected for what they say to run the Lord's work. From this point of view already three different storages exist as for (far) as church funds are concerned. According to the word of God is this right? Please help us clear our doubts.

**Answer:** The answer to your question really involves a number of other questions not answered in the background you have given.

- 1) Is the work being done by the various groups mentioned work the church ought to be doing?
- 2) Are the "leaders" working under the oversight of the elders, and if the congregation does not have elders, are they working with the approval of the congregation?
- 3) If the work being done is authorized in Scripture, and it is being carried out under the oversight of the elders, then the question is one of bookkeeping practices.

Clearly there is a need for funds to carry out the work of the church. Even Jesus and His disciples had a money bag (common treasury), and Judas was in charge of it (John 13:29). And, when Paul and others set out to collect funds from Gentile churches to aid their Jewish counterparts in Jerusalem, specific instructions were given for the collecting of those funds on the Lord's Day (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). Brethren were urged to give generously, and to do so with a good attitude (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

The Bible gives no specific instructions as to proper bookkeeping practices beyond the fact that everything should be carried out in an honest and open way (Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21), so that there is no hint of impropriety.

The way funds are accounted for is not determined in Scripture. This issue becomes a matter of expediency. Should there be one common fund out of which amounts are designated for specific works, or would it be more convenient to develop separate funds for each work? That seems to be a matter for the elders to determine, assuming the church has elders. If the church is scripturally unorganized (still does not have elders and deacons) the decision may fall to a business meeting.

What seems most crucial is the realization that all of the work God envisioned for the Lord's church was to be financed by the free will offerings of His people (Christians). We should not have bake sales, garage sales, or other means of fundraising. Let us give, and give generously for the work of the Lord, and let us practice liberty in areas where God has not given specific direction. In the end, all that is freely contributed to the Lord's cause is the Lord's money, whether we give to a specific area of work, or to the general collection, we must make sure the money is being used wisely for work the Lord wants His people to do!