

New Covenant Theology



New Covenant Giving

- When we looked at the question of tithing, we saw that the standard for New Covenant giving is that we are to give ***generously*** and ***cheerfully*** (without compulsion) (2 Cor. 9:7, 1Tim 6:17-19)
- So for the last few weeks we have been looking at the question: Who all should New Covenant believers be generously and cheerfully giving ***to***?
- We have seen that several categories of giving are mentioned in the NT:
 - Pastors/Elders
 - Ministers of the Gospel
 - The Poor
 - Other Areas of Giving?

Other Areas of Giving

- I would like for us to take a look at couple other areas of NT giving which are not directly mentioned in the NT, but I believe are legitimate, God-honoring things to which we might give:
 - Giving towards the finances associated with the local church meeting place
 - Giving to God-honoring organizations
 - Giving corporately versus individually

The Need to Finance a Church Meeting Place

- We talked about the need to support our pastors and giving to those in need within our church family, but another practical area of financial need in most local churches is paying the costs associated with the building in which the church meets.
- Obviously, the NT does not explicitly command us to even ***meet*** in a building, much less to give money towards securing and maintaining one.
- Indeed, there are many NT examples of believers meeting ***outdoors***:
 - Jesus often taught outdoors (e.g. the Sermon on the Mount)
 - Paul’s speech to the Ephesian elders, the only formal speech addressed to believers recorded in the book of Acts, seems to have taken place at the harbor at Miletus. (Acts 20:18-38)
 - At the end of his week’s stay in Tyre, Paul prayed with the local believers, including women and children, “on the beach” before boarding a ship for Jerusalem. (Acts 21:5)

The Need to Finance a Church Meeting Place

- But obviously there are practical reasons why it makes sense for regular church meetings to take place **indoors**, which is why we see many NT examples of believers meeting in a building of some kind.
- For a period of time after the resurrection, the apostles and the early church met in the Jewish temple (and in homes):
 - *And day by day, attending **the temple** together and breaking bread in **their homes**...* (Acts 2:46)
 - *Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in **Solomon's Portico** [a colonnade located on the east side of the temple]. (Act 5:12)*
 - *And every day, in **the temple** and from **house to house**, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.* (Act 5:42)
- The gathering of believers in the temple apparently continued until persecution forced members of the Jerusalem church out of the city. (Acts 8:1)

The Need to Finance a Church Meeting Place

- The Apostle Paul, when he first came to Ephesus, he preached for three months in the Jewish synagogue. (Acts 19:1,8)
- But then he took a number of disciples with him and began meeting in a **lecture hall** where he preached daily for **two years**:
 - *[Paul] withdrew from [the synagogue] and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the **hall of Tyrannus**. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.* (Act 19:9-10)

The Need to Finance a Church Meeting Place

- Several of Paul's NT letters refer in passing to what are more than likely examples of churches that met in ***homes***:
 - *Gaius, who is **host** to me and **to the whole church**, greets you.* (Rom. 16:23)
 - *Aquila and Prisca, together with **the church in their house**, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.* (1Cor. 16:19)
 - *Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and **the church in her house*** (Col. 4:15)
 - *To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and **the church in your house*** (Phm 1:1-2)

The Need to Finance a Church Meeting Place

- With the variety of examples of church meeting places given in the NT and the absence of any command as to where a church ought to meet, it seems clear to me that NT churches have the liberty to meet wherever they see fit.
- If a church chooses to meet indoors (which most do, for obvious reasons), there are going to be **costs** associated with the meeting place: purchase price or rental payment along with maintenance and upkeep, utilities, insurance, etc.
- In the case of **our** church, we own the building and grounds, but it currently requires about 50% of our annual budget to cover the cost of maintenance and upkeep, utilities, insurance, etc.
- The responsibility to cover those costs falls to us as members, and thus becomes a part of our NT giving.

Giving to God-Honoring Organizations

- There are a number of God honoring organizations today who depend on financial contributions in order to help the poor or serve the cause of the Gospel in some other way.
- The NT does not mention such organizations and so giving to them is not ***required***, but to the extent that these organizations help the poor or serve the cause of the Gospel, our support for them could be viewed as a part of our giving to the poor or support for ministers of the Gospel, which the NT ***does*** talk about.
- Examples of organizations I consider to be in this category:
 - Alpha and Omega Ministries (James White)
 - Answers in Genesis
 - Campus Crusade for Christ
 - Little Door International
 - Voice of the Martyrs
 - Lottie Moon

Giving – Corporately and Individually

- There is one last question I would like to look at concerning giving, especially giving to the poor: What are the advantages to giving individually versus corporately?
- Obviously there is a place for both, but I thought it would be helpful to look at the differences between the two.



Giving – Corporately and Individually

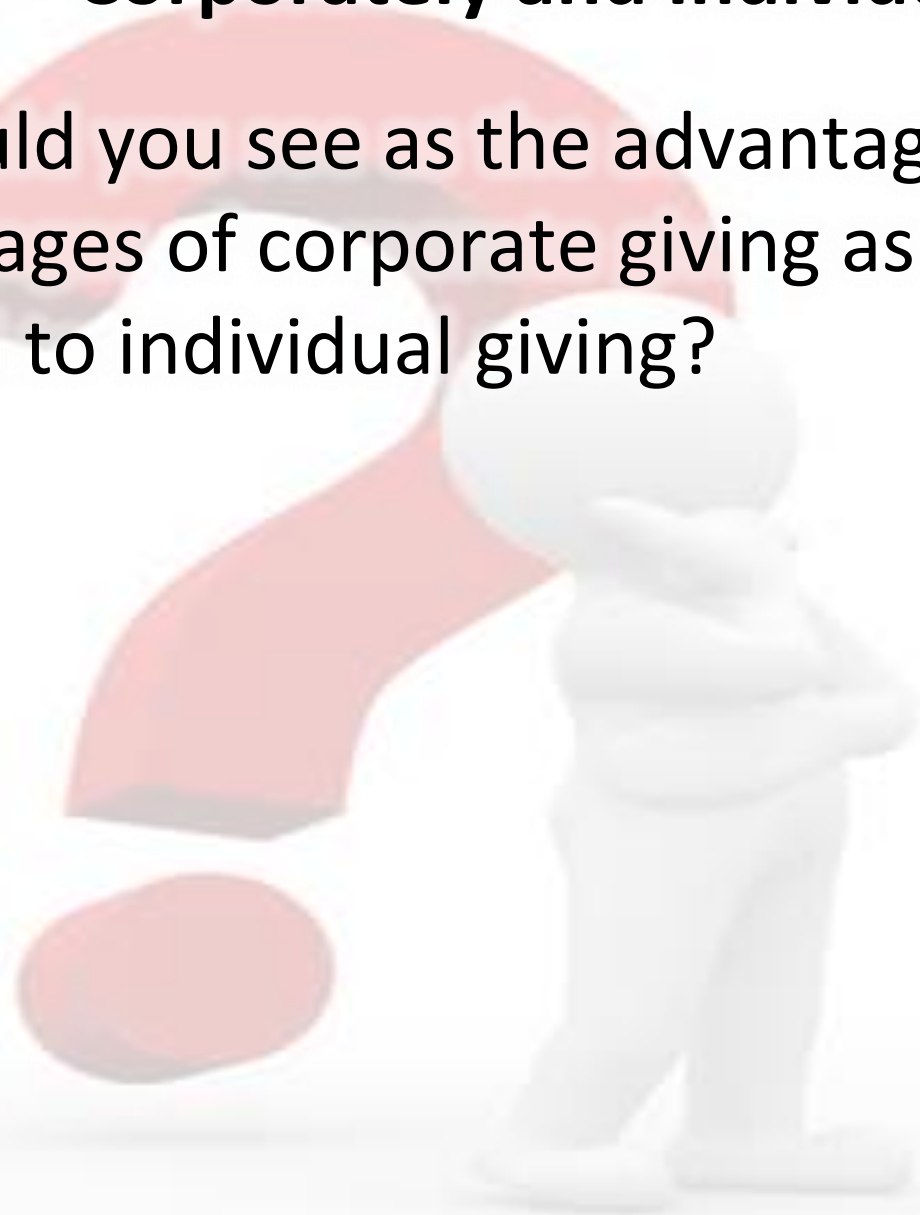
- There are a number of NT passages that show giving taking place at a corporate level:
 - *Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and **laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.*** (Act 4:32-35 ESV)
 - In Acts 6, the widows were cared for by (what we presume are) deacons chosen at a corporate level.
 - Paul organized the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem in such a way that the money was given, not by individuals or even individual congregations. Instead Paul solicited and gathered the money from a **number** of local Gentile churches and presented it as **one** offering to the church of Jerusalem. (Rom. 15:26-28; Acts 21)
 - Paul seems to have in mind the corporate funding of widows in 1Tim 5.

Giving – Corporately and Individually

- There are, of course, also many instances mentioned in the NT that involved *individual* giving:
 - The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-37)
 - Jesus' instructions concerning inviting the poor to a feast (Luke 14:13-14)
 - Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8-9)
 - Cornelius (Act 10:1-4)
 - Jesus' admonition to the “sheep and the goats” were addressed to individuals (Mat 25:31-46), as were the admonitions to help poor fellow believers given in James 2:14-17 and 1 John 3:16-17.

Giving – Corporately and Individually

- What would you see as the advantages and disadvantages of corporate giving as compared to individual giving?



Questions?

