

Benevolence Is an Important Activity in the Lord's Church
(Acts 2:41-47)

Introduction:

1. These verses provide a beautiful description of the Jerusalem congregation.
2. According to vs.44-45, the members practiced "benevolence."
3. This morning we showed from James 1:27 how "pure and undefiled religion includes visiting needy children."
4. This evening we are covering passages that show how "benevolence is an important activity in the Lord's church."
5. Let us begin by considering how . . .

Discussion:

- I. JESUS TAUGHT HIS FOLLOWERS TO PRACTICE BENEVOLENCE
 - A. Benevolence is implied in the second great commandment.
 1. This commandment is to "*love thy neighbor as thyself*" (Matthew 22:39).
 2. In His "parable of the Good Samaritan," Jesus illustrated how this includes caring for the needy (Luke 10:29-37).
 - B. The benevolent care of others is one standard by which we will be judged (Matthew 25:31-46).
 - C. Jesus certainly taught His followers to practice benevolence.
 - D. After Jesus built His church, . . .
- II. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS PRACTICED BENEVOLENCE
 - A. The members of the Jerusalem congregation made great sacrifices to provide the needs of their fellow Christians (Acts 2:44-45).
 - B. This practice continued (Acts 4:34-37).
 - C. The widows in this congregation received benevolent care (Acts 6:1-3).
 - D. Guidelines are given in 1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8, 16.
 - E. Dorcas showed how individual Christians practiced benevolence (Acts 9:36, 39).
 - F. The Christians in Antioch sent relief to the Christians in Judea (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).
 - G. In Acts 20:35 Paul taught the elders of the church in Ephesus to practice benevolence.
 - H. The early Christians certainly practiced benevolence.
- III. BENEVOLENCE IS ALSO ADDRESSED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES
 - A. Benevolence is included with many other responsibilities (Romans 12:13).
 - B. Benevolence must be practiced with the proper attitude (1 Corinthians 13:3).
 - C. Christians are to take advantage of opportunities to practice benevolence (Galatians 6:9-10).
 - D. Christians are to work so the needy may be assisted (Ephesians 4:28).
 - E. According to 2 Thessalonians 3:10, those who will not work are not entitled to benevolent care.
 - F. In 1 Timothy 6:17-19 wealthy Christians are especially admonished to practice benevolence.
 - G. God is "*well pleased*" when His children practice benevolence (Hebrews 13:16).

Conclusion:

1. The Scriptures are very clear -- "benevolence is an important activity in the Lord's church."
2. Let us keep these passages in mind as we respond to the opportunity given to us to assist needy children.