

## Questions Concerning the Collection

*John Isaac Edwards*

**P**aul wrote, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This text answers several questions concerning the collection.

**When?** *Upon the first day of the week.* The first day of the week is a day of great significance in the New Testament. On this day, Jesus arose from the dead (Mark 16:1-6), the risen Lord appeared to His disciples (Mark 16:9; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:19-29), the first recorded gospel sermon was preached and the church of Christ was established (Leviticus 23:15-16; Acts 2), and disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7). 1 Corinthians 16:2 is the sum total of all the New Testament says as to the *time* for a collection by the church. It is specific and exclusive. Inasmuch as every week has a first day, the collection is weekly.

**Who?** *Let every one of you.* Paul addresses his letter “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2). Every saint is commanded to give and should consider it a blessing to participate in the collection for the saints.

**What?** *Lay by him in store.* The fact that each Christian is to lay by in store suggests a common treasury into which members of the local church pool their resources.

**How Much?** *As God hath prospered him.* In the Old Testament, God commanded tithing (Leviticus 27:30-34; Malachi 3:8). In the New Testament, the Lord’s people are instructed to give as God has prospered them. Our giving is to be in proportion with our prospering. The more we prosper, the more we give.

**Why?** *That there be no gatherings when I come.* There were poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul planned to travel to Corinth and wanted things to be ready when he arrived so that those approved could bring the liberality of the Corinthians unto Jerusalem. This shows that the early church regularly gave of their means upon the first day of the week.

Also, notice that the collection is *for the saints*. In the New Testament, relief of the church was limited to “poor saints” (Romans 15:26). No doubt, there were hungry non-saints, but where do we find the New Testament church trying to feed and clothe those who were non-Christians?

The early church practiced giving as a part of their first day of the week worship, and so do we.

# How Should I Give?

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**H**aving learned that the early church practiced giving as a part of their first day of the week worship, how should I give today?

**Weekly.** Paul penned, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store...” (1 Corinthians 16:2). Every week has a first day, right?

**As Prospered.** Paul continues, “...as God hath prospered him...” (1 Corinthians 16:2). How much I give is determined by how much I prosper. The more I prosper, the more I should give.

**Bountifully.** Paul used agricultural terms to teach us how to give: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6). My attitude should be how much can I give and not how little can I give!

**As Purposed.** 2 Corinthians 9:7 records, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give...” My giving is to be planned; not a reaching into the wallet as the basket is being passed around to see what, if anything, is there!

**Cheerfully.** “...not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). If my giving reflects reluctance or unwillingness, I might as well not give. Consider the good things God has done for us. Don’t you feel indebted to God?

**Willingly.** The Lord has always expected His people to give of a willing heart. When giving for the tabernacle, the Lord required, “...that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering” (Exodus 25:2). 2 Corinthians 8:12 says, “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

**Sacrificially.** I like the attitude of David. When presented with an opportunity to offer to God that which did not cost him anything personally, he said, “...I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). That which I give ought to cost me something. Remember the giving of the “poor widow” in Luke 12:1-4?

Read Luke 6:38 and Acts 20:35.

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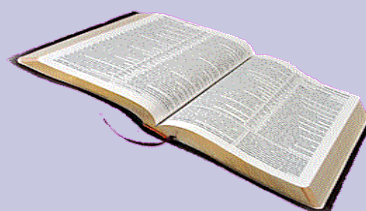
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Is Our  
Only Guide!*