

Support Raising

GOD'S PATTERN OF PROVISION:

Understanding the biblical precedent for support raising

By: Roger Randall

So you're going to have to raise support? Maybe you've quaked at the very thought, or really wondered if you can do it. Well, you're not the first one to wonder that. Many have gone into the support-raising adventure with fear and trembling, and most have found great success in support raising. You can, too. A good way to start is by understanding the biblical rationale behind the practice. Once you have an understanding of that, you'll be better able to raise support with boldness and confidence.

THE FIRST FINANCIAL PLAN:

Nearly 3,300 years ago God designed a financial plan that would provide salaries and benefits to His workers. In the book of Numbers, God called the Levites to be His "professional" ministers, instructing them to rely on Him for their income and financial stability. There were plenty of qualified and motivated laymen (such as Moses, Joshua and Caleb) to work on the tabernacle, but God was looking for more than part-time help. He wanted to meet the demanding spiritual needs of the nation, but these couldn't be met by even the most dedicated workers in their spare time alone. While the nation Israel worked the land and faced the financial uncertainties brought on by drought, disease and famine, the Lord promised to provide for the Levites through the tithes and offerings of their countrymen. The people of God were to support the full-time ministers of God.

THE COVENANT OF INTERDEPENDENCE:

After Christ came, God established a new covenant whereby any believer (not just those in the family of Levi) could serve him in full-time ministry. Jesus, who was a carpenter, could have funded his ministry by building furniture or repairing carts and tables. But as far as we know, he didn't. As Jesus went out ministering, he relied on people such as Mary, Martha and Lazarus who helped "...support him out of their own means" (Luke 8:3). Jesus had financial supporters.

When Christ commissioned his followers, he gave them the spiritual authority to minister and told them to trust Him for their physical provisions (Matthew 10:9-10). Jesus gave specific directions to his disciples that forced them to depend on others for their needs. They were to accept gifts from others, as Jesus said, "...eating and drinking whatever they give you; for the worker deserves his wages" (Luke 10:4-7). A laborer in God's Kingdom is truly worthy of being paid for his service. The workers in the early church lived on a similar system of support that God established for the Levites.

The apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 9:14, "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." He explains that God set up a system of financial support for his workers. He also writes that even though he had the right to be supported by the Corinthians, he chose to make tents. This was an exception, however, to Paul's usual method of ministry. Paul wanted to make sure that the Corinthians to whom he preached had no reason to question his motives. He chose to live on a smaller salary and take less from the Corinthians in order to validate his character, his faith, and his ministry. With the Corinthian church, Paul may have supplemented his income by sewing canvas, but he did not rely on gifts from supporters. Paul willingly received financial support from other Christians and churches, and he asked for support. In Romans, he wrote, "...When I go to Spain...I hope to have you assist me on my journey" (Romans 15:24). The original language in this verse confirms that Paul was requesting money.

John also made reference to God's people financially backing their own people: "It was for the sake of the Name that they went, receiving nothing from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such so that we may work together for the truth" (III John 7:8).

LIVING BY FAITH TODAY:

Raising support doesn't make you holier than other Christians. There's nothing you can do or fail to do that will make you more spiritual or alter your eternal position in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 6:5-9). Many outstanding denominations and mission groups offer salaries to their missionaries, and the Lord is honoring their ministries. All Christians need to live by faith (II Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:6) regardless of how they receive their paychecks. The bottom line is that you need to be willing to do whatever the Lord asks you to do, or you won't be qualified for any missionary career (salaried or supported).

Most people find themselves a little uneasy as they approach the challenge of support raising. It seems to go against the American culture to depend on others-especially for finances. As Christians, we need to heed the strong scriptural warnings about conforming to our culture's values. We must remember that the Bible strongly states that accepting support gifts is part of God's economy. In this sense, raising support is a manner of obedience to God's word and calling, not of following your feelings. If God calls you to a supported ministry position, then He will provide everything you need to fulfill your ministry, including emotional strength and perseverance (Philippians 4:19, I Thessalonians 5:24).

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT:

We've put together an outline that we hope might assist you in sharing your ministry vision for this trip. We want this to be simple for you! Really- just pray, and see what God does! However, here are a few more guidelines that may help:

STEP #1: PRAY! Ask God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills to provide for your need (Psalm 50:10-12)! Remember, if God has called you, He will provide your needed finances (Philippians 4:19).

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE:

If you have sensed God's call to go on this mission trip and you are in need of additional financial help in order to go, just remember that this does not come as a surprise to the Lord. He is already aware of your need, and has prepared a way to meet this need. I Thessalonians 5:24 says "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."

STEP #2: Set up a meeting with your pastor.

- Give your pastor the trip information sheet.
- Explain the purpose for the trip and share your vision!

-Let him know what the total cost of the trip is _____ that you can cover \$ _____ and that you will need to raise funds for the rest.

-Ask your pastor if you can meet with the mission's committee to ask if the church would consider supporting you. If there is no mission committee, ask your pastor.

-Assure your pastor that you are planning on writing a letter to many friends, so that you are not looking to the church to be your only means of support.

-Remember to be sensitive to any restrictions that your church places on your fund-raising.

STEP #3: Brainstorm! TO WHOM SHOULD YOU WRITE AND CALL?

Your Christmas card list, your Bible study group, your church, Sunday School class, your parent's Christmas list, schoolmates, relatives, and co-workers.

STEP #4: Send Your Fund-Raising Letters With Contribution Envelopes.

Personalize your letter's with a hand written note.

STEP #5: Follow Your Letter With a Phone Call.

Remember, phone calls are very important! A phone call personalizes your request. Two to three times as many people will give you a response if you make the phone calls. Look over the suggested phone conversation. When calling friends, transitioning to talking about finances might seem awkward. The suggested phone conversation offers ideas on how to bridge the gap.

Suggested Transitions During Phone Conversations:

When you call a friend, many times, even without you bringing it up, he will say "I received your letter ... we can do such and such to help you." Or, "I'm sorry, but now is not a good time for us to help you." On either case, you will want to thank him for his willingness to have prayerfully considered it. If after a couple of minutes, he has not mentioned it (and it may well be that he is waiting for you to ask), simply ask, "Did you receive my letter about going on the Summer Outreach" (if he has not or has not had a chance to read your letter, be prepared to give a brief recap of what the trip will be like and how God has called you.) Then, continue, "As you know, in my letter, I shared that I am in the process of raising \$_____ to be able to go and as I promised, I'm calling to see if the Lord has led you to help?" At that point, pause! Remain silent. Give him a chance to respond. Again he will answer "Yes", or "No", we cannot help you at this present time." Or, the response may be that he needs more time. Thank him for either his help or his prayerful consideration! If he needs more time, asks if you can give a call back in a few days.

STEP #6: Set Up Appointments to Speak to Larger Groups.

Approach your pastor, or perhaps your Sunday school teacher. Ask if you would be allowed to communicate your need with the group he teaches. Share the same things that you shared in the letter with the group. Remember to share your calling and vision. Communicate your financial and prayer needs. Then, pass out self-addressed envelopes, and contribution coupons. Let them know that you can either collect all of the envelopes after you are finished or they can mail the envelope to you later.

NOTE: *Remember, everyone's challenge often becomes no one's challenge. Putting the envelope into each individual's hand personalizes your request and narrows the scope to each individual within the group.* Communicate your deadline!

Before you finish, send around a sign-up sheet in order to get people's names and phone numbers. Then follow-up your meeting with the larger group with a personal phone call to those individuals, thus personalizing the request. Always thank your pastor or Sunday School teacher, and thank the group for prayerfully considering becoming a partner with for the mission trip.

REMEMBER, IF GOD HAS CALLED YOU, HE WILL PROVIDE. You will find friends, as well as individuals you have yet to meet, who will be as excited about your trip as you are! Even though they may not be able to go with you, they will consider it a great privilege to be a part of your team.

MISSION'S FUND RAISING

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature..." Mark 16:15

"Countless numbers of people, people on whom God has placed a great call, wait for His leading and directions. There is a time to wait, and there is a time for action. Follow your heart! As we begin to move, divine guidance comes. As we begin to act, divine power is loosed. With a passion for souls, you can do all things..."

The following are simply ideas to get you started. Use what you have...your talents, your hands, your resources and circle of influence!

With God's divine guidance...you can use your talents and ideas to raise the money you need. Remember, you can do all things through Christ Jesus!

IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE FUND RAISING\$\$\$

ENTER YOUR OWN IDEAS FOR FUND RAISING \$\$\$

❖ <u>Hold a garage sale:</u> Clean out the closets and the garage and sell from your abundance...	❖ <u>Have a Car Wash:</u> Grab a hose, a few buckets, a few towels, a few friends, and make some \$\$.
❖ <u>Sell Puppies:</u> If you or someone you know has breed dogs, sell puppies to raise funds....it has been done before!	❖ <u>Work a part time job.</u> God will and can supply work opportunities!!
❖ <u>Have a bake sale:</u> Get out your cooking friends and bake lots of goodies and sell at public facilities -- simply ask the manager to allow you the space.	❖ <u>Get a low interest, mortgage loan:</u> If you own a home, a mortgage loan is tax deductible...this would be an investment into eternity worth more than any vacation trip!
❖ <u>Sell your talent or hobby:</u> Use what you have...do you have a talent like making balloon animals? Dress up like a clown and sell your talent to a party function...Offer a service to clean yards, paint rooms in a house, ...find a need and fill it!!	❖ <u>Produce a donation request letter and approach local business', friends, neighbors, etc...</u> Many people would love to help and/or have a desire to contribute but don't have the time or means to go themselves. Some people will contribute if you just ask!
❖ REMEMBER! Any Fund raising must be done on your own merits. <u>Please do not use your organization</u> to be a sight for fundraising or use the name on any endorsements...All efforts must be done on a personal level.... THANKS!	❖ <u>Pray and seek God's guidance:</u> There are many ways to raise funds. The local library has many books on effective fund raising. Decide that you want to go on missions, and you will find the way to make it happen!

❖ NOTES: