

## BENEVOLENCE REQUESTS

As a fellowship and family of believers in Jesus Christ, ReGeneration Church desires to assist the poor and needy as the Holy Spirit directs us and as the Bible defines such help.

Admittedly, it is not always easy to determine who is truly needy by Biblical standards. One reason it's difficult to discern a true need (at times) is that the welfare system in the U.S. has cultivated a laziness and "victim" mentality for some, creating a culture of expectation which demands something for nothing. Another factor is that oftentimes, a person making a request for benevolence finds himself or herself in a difficult situation due to willful sin, irresponsibility and/or lack of self-control.

Yet there are legitimate needs that do arise within ReGeneration Church, the overall body of Christ, and the community at large. As stewards over all that God provides to us here at ReGeneration Church, we want to do an excellent job of directing God's resources in the ways in which He directs us. We want to spend His money His way. We are blessed to partner with Him in these ways.

In 1 Timothy chapter 5:3-16, the Holy Spirit gives us specific principles concerning such assistance within the church. These verses, along with various other passages of scripture, will be used to help the pastors determine the appropriateness of each request.

1. Never contribute to someone else's irresponsibility. Investigation is required to in order to determine legitimate needs (vs. 3-4).
2. The church should take care of its own first (vs. 5-7).
3. Don't interfere with the character transformation God wants to accomplish in a person's life (vs. 9-10).
4. Give God the opportunity to work through other means (vs. 11-12).
5. Ensure that benevolence will not lead to further temptation (v. 13).
6. Look for long-term solutions to the situation (vs. 14-15).
7. Encourage church members to take care of each other (v. 16).

*What are the specific steps that are taken with each request?*

After the initial inquiry, each request is directed to one of the pastoral staff. A meeting may than be scheduled to assess the nature of the need, and the circumstances surrounding it.

It will be required of all non-attendees of ReGeneration Church to fill out a benevolence request form prior to meeting with a pastor. For attendees, a benevolence request form will be filled out following the meeting with the pastor, as appropriate.

After prayer, consideration from the word of God, further investigation, and counsel of at least two pastors, a decision will be made regarding the request. Please keep in mind that such a decision may take a week or more, perhaps even two weeks.

If benevolence is granted, it will be given in the form of a check made out to the utility company landlord, etc... or in the form of a food voucher for groceries. Under no circumstances benevolence be in the form of cash.

*Please note:* in some cases, the pastor may decide that financial counsel is needed as part of benevolence. This counsel can be an invaluable part of the discipleship of the individual. A request to obtain such counsel will invalidate the benevolence request.

*Miscellaneous relevant scriptures:*

Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and *now* am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaker his descendants begging bread.

Matthew 6:33-34 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in an disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Psalm 41:1 Blessed is he who considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.