

Maranatha Bible Chapel Guidelines for Benevolence Giving

The Deacons of Maranatha Bible Chapel have been entrusted to care for the needy as described in Acts 4:32-37, Acts 6:1-4, and related passages such as Isaiah 58:7 and Ezekiel 18:7.

The ultimate purpose of everything we do is to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This may happen as opportunities arise during the course of the Deacon's work to directly witness to unsaved folks and invite them to accept Jesus as Savior. This may happen by planting "seeds" in unsaved people's hearts as they see the "good works that glorify our Father in heaven". Whatever the avenue, as we carry out God's instructions to us to care for the needy in our church and community, He will accomplish a furthering of His kingdom through us.

To that end, we are responsible to distribute the assistance in a wise, effective, fair and just manner. The Acts accounts indicate that the needs of the believers in the Church were the focus of the giving (Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4, Acts 6). However, the Church is also called to care for the needy outside the Church (Luke 10:37, 1 Thessalonians 3:12).

Considering our purpose and these examples from scripture, the following guidelines are to assist the Deacons in distributing the benevolence monies:

- Prior to any distribution, the Deacon(s) must talk with the potential recipient(s) to discuss the need, the background leading up to the need, and try to assess the requestor's true state of need. In many cases, the requestor will be a church member or adherent and will simply make the need known to the pastor, elder or deacon in the church.
- In cases of little-known requestors outside the knowledge of the church membership, it is much preferred to meet the potential recipient(s) IN PERSON. However, if this cannot be arranged, phone conversation may suffice in some few cases.
- At least 2 deacons must approve a distribution before the treasurer releases the funds.
- In many cases, both financial assistance and directing to help (e.g. Financial counseling) will be needed. In some cases, only financial assistance or only directing to assistance will be needed. In some cases, no help will be given.
- If limited funds require selective distribution, then order of priority is church members and adherents, relatives/friends of members & adherents, and finally those unassociated with the church.
- For every distribution, record the name of the recipient(s), phone and address not only for our records, but so that we can contact them later. In cases of unfamiliarity with the recipient, it is recommended to phone or visit sometime after the first contact and prior to the distribution, to make sure of the contact.
- A guideline limit of giving is up to \$400 Maximum per distribution. Limits may be lower for persons with no association with the church but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

- A guideline limit of giving is up to \$800 Maximum per 12-month period. Limits may be lower for persons with no association with the church but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Typical assistance includes: utilities, gasoline, rent, groceries, medical expenses, taxes, car repairs, etc. As much as possible, payment is to be made direct to provider (e.g., to the Landlord for the rent).
- Although each case will be unique, certain things should clearly not be funded. For example, vacations, abortion pills or abortions, elective cosmetic surgery, credit card bills, gambling money, investment monies, etc.
- Non-monetary distributions (e.g., fixing plumbing, providing temporary transportation, etc.) cannot easily have limits placed on them, however, we should not be building a house for one person and not even fixing a faucet for another. We will consider all needs and evaluate them based upon available resources but we may ask for additional background or information gathering session to assist in our decision.
- In addition to monetary assistance all need requests will be evaluated alongside other supportive assistance that may be apparent. We may recommend or refer you to other more appropriate forms of assistance including financial counseling, local food pantries, local human resource organizations, counseling, pastoral counseling, etc.

Please complete the following:

Case # _____

Name: _____ Your name if a referral: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell phone number: _____

Email: _____ Best time to reach you: _____

Describe need and circumstances:

Please give us any relevant deadlines or dates: _____

If you are not a part of our church please note if you have any connections with someone who attends Maranatha Bible Chapel: _____

Please sign to acknowledge these guidelines: _____