

September 21, 2014

Grateful Givers

Acts 4: 32 – *Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.*

Here in Acts, we see something pretty special. Those who believed in Christ shared all they had with each other in order to support their needs. No one had any need because everyone provided for everyone else. And because of this generosity, the apostles were able to spread the message of the resurrection of Jesus while physically providing for the needy. What a wonderful image.

Here at Tree of Life, you all are very gracious givers. In fact, I have not seen a church that rises so readily to a monetary challenge. Just think, we raised funds for that pavilion in no time flat. For such gracious giving, I would like to thank you. When the need is demonstrated you all rise to exceptional heights of generosity.

Today, I would like to demonstrate another need. Your offering, it is needed. Your offering is an important contribution, because through it we fund and conduct our various ministries. Without it we would have to stand in front of you weekly and ask for money for specific things, but that gets tiresome for you and embarrassing for us. When that kind of thing happens it appears that all we ever do at your church is ask you for more money. When that kind of thing happens, it becomes an irritation to you and gets in the way of other

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things that we could be doing as a church. When we have to worry about money, we are stressing your budgets and wallets and aren't helping others to know Christ and his love.

Money has been and will always be a very touchy subject, especially in the church, because it can so easily get in the way of our true purpose. But, you have elected a fine and trustworthy group of people to lead your church, and your budget. So, this is my request: instead of waiting for a specific need to be announced sometime during a service and then graciously giving a large sum to that cause, we as a church become grateful givers, following the model in acts, giving what we can each week or month so that God through the council and the elders can make sure that there is no needy ministry or other need here at Tree.

Now, thank you for reading this far without getting too upset or angry. I know that money is a frustrating subject. In fact, next to religion I wouldn't be surprised if it was the most fought over thing in the world. But, I am not asking you to *overspend* yourself for the church or anything of the sort. That would be poor stewardship. All I'm asking is that we as a church become grateful givers as well as gracious, putting a little more in the plate on Sundays *when we can* for our ministries. God's peace.

Pastor *Carl J. H.*

