

Wicked Tithing Practices Part 2
Should Pastors and Elders Receive A Salary?

By Duane Linn

(based on a paper by Lew Ayotte)

“I came to believe that there was no valid support or defense for paying the salary of a pastor or elder while I was at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. This was while I was training to become a vocational/paid pastor! It was through my experiences at the seminary and studying the scriptures that made me realize that just about everything we do in “traditional church” cannot be defended or supported with the scriptures (try as we might). So, I have been inspired, by a conversation with my brother-in-law, to write about the misguided idea that pastors/elders should receive a salary. But before I start, let me say that I am not saying it is wrong or sinful to pay a man to teach you every Sunday morning, all I am saying is that this practice cannot be justified using the Christian Bible. I would also say that in most cases, paying the salary of a pastor/elder is quite often detrimental to the maturity and growth of the church.”- Lew Ayotte
1/10/2013

I too, had come to a similar conclusion about 4 years prior, while being a part of the ministry of Steve Lumbley (Apostasy Watch). I became further convinced in February of 2012, while a member of the congregation of B. S. (no pun intended) in an offshoot denomination of the Presbyterian Church (RPCUS, if I remember correctly).

Prior to officially joining the church, after being examined to see if I merited entry via the telephone, I had to sign a contract pledging that I would obey the Elders of the Church and pay 10% of my gross income as a pre-requisite to joining; a “formality”.

Well, here are the points of discussion that I would like to lay out before the visible church.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

So, let us talk about the most popular verse use to support paying an elder, 1 Timothy 5:17-18...

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

The ultimate question with this verse is what does honor mean... or in this case double honor. Many people equate honor with wage, the laborer deserves his wage and the elder deserves his wage too. Which does not really make sense. In essence, what Paul is saying here is “Elders are worthy of double honor, just like oxen are worthy of their grain, and laborers are worthy of their wage.” We cannot rightly say that elders are worthy of their wage because laborers are... not unless you are prepared to say that elders are worthy of their grain too. You see, elders are not oxen and they are not laborers, they are elders! (technically, an elder could be a laborer, if they got real jobs to support themselves and their families)

You may be inclined to say that elders work at least 40 hours a week and are on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Surely that is a job and quite labor intensive. And yes, I would agree with you, but that is not an elder’s job, no where in scripture can you defend the practice of making eldership as employment. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find any description of an elder that prescribes the job requirements of a modern day pastor. An elder is someone who has simply been recognized as being mature in Christ, not someone who gets paid to perform certain duties.

There is another fundamental problem with associating the term “double honor” with “wage” in this text. If we read a few verses from before, 1 Timothy 5:3...

Honor widows who are widows indeed

You see, just a few lines above where Paul talks about double honor he says that widows are worthy of single honor. If we are confident that double honor is the same as a laborer’s wage, then all the true widows in your church should get half the salary that your senior pastor makes (and half the grain).

I have not heard anyone, ever, suggest that we need to pay a widow an annual salary. So what does honor mean here? Well, the Greek words for honor (τιμάω / τιμή) is used in both verses to literally mean, “respect.” In other words, the godly people in the church deserve respect, especially if they teach and preach — and the widows should be respected too.

We should also consider a few verses that come after 1 Timothy 5:17-18, namely, 1 Timothy 6:1...

All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.

If double honor means that we should pay our elders a salary, then logically speaking, slaves should pay their masters a salary, right? And yes, this is the same Greek word τιμή used in 1 Timothy 5:17-18. It truly does not make sense to say that Paul meant “honor” as one meaning in between two other uses of the same word. Not to mention, how could a slave pay their masters a salary at all? Unless of course these slaves were paid, which may be historically accurate, why would they then be required to give all that money back to the person who paid them?

1 Corinthians 9:14

Let us move onto the next verse, 1 Corinthians 9:14...

So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

Well, this is pretty damning evidence, is it not? No, not really. Let us consider the some of the context surrounding the verse, 1 Corinthians 9:9-18 (bolded to illustrate my point)...

For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

You have to realize, Paul (the author of this letter) repeatedly says that although they have the right to receive money for their work, they did not pursue this right. They did this so they would not hinder the gospel. Oh, and there is also an often ignored smoking gun in this verse. Do you

see it? This verse has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to do with pastors or elders! This is about missionaries. Paul was not an elder or a pastor, he was a missionary. He was travelling from town to town as a missionary spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Now, I would be the last person to argue that we should not support missionary work, but Paul here says it is ideal for a missionary to find their own work and support themselves! But we cannot deny the fact that in this context, those who proclaim the gospel get their living from the gospel is talking about people who are leaving their home town and travelling far away to share about the Christ. In other words, these are people who would, in any normal situation, have a hard time finding employment and supporting their own physical needs.

Galatians 6:6

The next verse is pretty weak, Galatians 6:6...

The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.

I am not even sure how this verse can be used to support paying someone a salary. Especially considering how the verse continues, 6:7-9...

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

In other words, if you teach the word (sow), you can expect to reap spiritual blessings from that work. This has nothing to do with money, I think many people out there who share the gospel can speak to the blessings they have received from the people who they have shared with or continue to disciple.

Philippians 4:14-19

The last verse that is commonly used to support paying a pastor/elder is Philippians 4:14-19...

Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift

more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

We still have to deal with the same smoking gun as above, Paul is a missionary, not an elder/pastor. But yes, apparently the Philippians supported Paul when he was going through a rough patch, and he considered it a blessing. Though he did not seek the gift, he is glad that their graciousness will profit the Philippians. I would also like to point out that this is not a salary, it is a gift of support they sent Paul while he was away. In other words, this verse does not support paying a pastor/elder a salary!

The Old Testament Priests

Many people look to the Old Testament priesthood as an example or model of how we should support our pastors and elders. There is one hugely fundamental problem with this concept though. We are all priests, we have direct communication with God, we do not need to go to a human to have our sins overlooked. The priestly system was setup in a certain way for a certain time. And that whole system was ultimately fulfilled through Jesus (thankfully).

Final Thoughts

Of the four verses I talked about today, the only one that has any direct bearing on elders is 1 Timothy 5:17-18. If there were a verse to support paying a pastor a salary, it would be that one. Unfortunately, it does not... it cannot! The fact is, the church system is not meant to function the way that it does, the way that requires one or a few men to teach every Sunday, to be on-call 24x7, to be the only people who visit the sick in the hospital, the men who sets the vision for the church (as if God did not already do that 2,000 years ago), etc. The church should function in a way that we all share in the responsibility of discipling one-another, we should love one-another, we should visit one-another and help one-another. This responsibility should not, **MUST NOT**, fall on one man (or a few men). Earlier I said that paying a pastors salary was detrimental to the maturity and growth of the church. What I meant was this, when we pay a man to do the stuff that we should be doing, we fail to grow. Sure, we might learn something every now and then as we mindlessly sit in our pews, but that is not growing or maturing. We grow spiritually when we learn how to give up our own wants and needs for those around us. That is extremely hard to do when we think that paying a mans salary to do those things for us is what God wants from us. With all that said, let me leave you with a few quotes from the scripture that do support the ideal of being unpaid...

For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. – 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10

What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. – 1 Corinthians 9:18

I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" – Acts 20:33-35

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. – 1 Peter 5:1-3

I think that this should be sufficient enough to warrant a full scale investigation into the practice of Pastors and Elders receiving a salary for giving something that is supposed to be free given.

Now, if we are truthful, what is being passed off as the gospel of Jesus Christ is a woeful rendition of the Truth.

Here is an example of the goings on in a non-denominational church. For the record, this took place on a weekly basis at a church I attended in Arvada, CO in 2006-2007.

Doors opened at around 8am. Service times were standard for the Sunday worship crowd. Worship services were done in the contemporary and "modern", or, "traditional" manner.

Books lined the rear of the "welcome center" just inside the front doors of the main building and there was another building across the street with a connecting walkway above the street.

Inside the main building, outside the sanctuary, there was a concession area where food and drinks were served.

Inside the sanctuary, there was rock music and a choir doing their thing.

As the pastor came out, the benediction was given shortly thereafter, followed by a bit of worship (with the rock band and the choir getting their turns to do their thing). Then, the organ music started and the solemn music came on and the ushers started the business of collecting the tithes.

After this, the pastor (sometimes the pastor's wife as well) started the service off with an announcement or two.

Then came the sermon. It lasted about 20-25 minutes and came with slips of paper that were given to each attendee to "fill in the blank" on the topic that was being preached that morning.

Then, the "worship" started again (CCM most of the time) for about another 20 minutes and then the service was over. This happened two or three times on Sunday in both buildings.

There was a Wednesday service as well.

Now I ask you the question; does this warrant, or merit, paid salaries for the Pastor and Elders?

For a few hours a week of work? 40K and above for the pastor per year? PLUS the kickbacks from the unbiblical 501C3?

Beloved... this is highway robbery of the worst sort. The robbing of widows and orphans.

And you have wonder why the nation is in such chaos? Why the visible church is a mockery amongst the heathen? Why there is a perpetual revolving door in every "church" in the country?

This is what I leave you with to consider.

If what has been described here in this sermon is going on in your church, let me ask you... why are you still going? If you are awakened AND of the Elect of God, you should know all too well that you MUST "come out from among them and be ye (that is, you all), BE YE SEPARATE!

2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Here, we see yet another example laid before us by the Apostle Paul to that congregation at Corinth. We know that the Corinthians have a lot of problems going on in their congregation.

We are told here in this second letter, that there are those in that body that are what? UNBELIEVERS. They look like Christians. Yet, they are in chaos. They allowed the incest between a man and his mother in law to go on without rebuke and corrective measures that were established in Matthew 18 and took the same attitude as most professors today take when witnessing blatant sin in their midst; “don’t judge, don’t judge”. You know it’s true because you have seen it and may even do the same.

Paul calls these professors of religion, “unbelievers”.

We also know that it is “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God”. We are told this 3 TIMES, beloved. Three times. Once in each synoptic Gospel.

Mt 19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Mr 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Lu 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

What do you think is the fruit of the unlawful Levitical Tithe in the Christian churches? Wealth and material prosperity gained by fleecing the flock of 10% of their gross income before taxes every week.

Congregations paying through the nose year in and year out. What are you learning, exactly? Can you disciple a “weaker brother or sister”, men? Can you detail how you know you are saved and the steps that must happen in order to verify it? Has the log been removed from your eye as a result of regeneration? Can you even name the 12 tribes of Israel?

If you can’t answer these questions in the affirmative, again, I ask you... what are you doing there? Year in and year out and you don’t grow as Christians.

WHY ARE YOU STILL AMONG THEM? Why are these people still valued by you who you now know are hopelessly lost?

Where in the Scripture are pastors authorized to join with a “Belial” government in the 501C3 tax exempt subsidy? We are commanded to render unto Caesar what is Caesars; e.g., “pay your taxes”. How can these supposedly “educated” men do such things if their hearts are not engaged in covetous practices?

2Pe 2:1 ¶ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

2Pe 2:3 ¶ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2Pe 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

2Pe 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

2Pe 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

2Pe 2:7 ¶ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

2Pe 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

2Pe 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

2Pe 2:10 ¶ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

2Pe 2:11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

2Pe 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

2Pe 2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

2Pe 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

2Pe 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Is Peter talking about the non-professing Christian in these verses?

No. He is not. He was directing this to the “false teachers among you”.

The Pastors and Elders.

Come out from among them and be separate.

I'll let you in on one more item to consider and then call it a night.

The Elect men are authorized to administer the Lord's Supper and also baptize. You ask, "how can this be; we're not "ordained"

Where in the Scripture do you find commandment to obtain a seminary education in order to administer the Sacraments? This practice was instituted by Rome; not the Bible. Do we follow after Rome and her institutions, or do we follow the Lord Jesus Christ?

If the men are commanded to teach their children the Laws and the Statutes, are they then told that they may not administer the Sacraments?

De 6:3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

De 6:4 ¶ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

De 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

De 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

De 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

De 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

De 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

De 11:18 ¶ Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

De 11:19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

De 11:20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:

De 11:21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

De 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

De 11:23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

De 11:24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

De 11:25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

De 11:26 ¶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

De 11:27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

De 11:28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

No. They're not told such things by the Scriptures. They're only told by those who follow after Rome and her teachings. Moses tells us twice.

And so, thus ends tonight's message.

This sermon is available in PDF format as well.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless and preserve you.

Father,

How much longer will this continue? How much longer will You forbear unleashing Your fiery wrath on such a monstrosity? This is not what You commanded as a method of corporate worship. You never declared that the Gentile church should usurp the methods of support that You gave to the Levites in Your Holy Law. That is, to collect tithes to pay pastors and elders a salary.

It is my prayer, Father, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that You would either reform this wicked body of fake Christians, or wipe them out. Let their cups overflow with liquid from the winepress of Your Wrath and consume them.

For the sake of Thy Word and Thy Kingdom!

In Jesus' Name,

Amen

