

A Paycheck? **By Russ Earl**

How do we earn our paychecks? We go to work and we do our duties that are involved within our job. At the end of the week we expect to be paid for those duties that were performed. Why then is it that we see preachers who labor and toil in the field and receive very little in return in the form of money from the congregation?

In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul says, *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"* and, *"The laborer is worthy of his wages."* We find the same idea being taught by Christ in Luke 10:7. So why then does it seem in some congregations, as if some feel the preacher and his wife should do so much, while receiving little in return.

Think about your current position in the work place. Depending on the job you, are to receive pay increases at certain times: six months, yearly, etc. How would you feel if you didn't receive those types of increases? Increases such as: cost of living increases, increases for a job well done, increases for additional duties being assigned, and compensation for "wear and tear" on you vehicle. I think if we honestly thought about those things, we would be hurt and upset if such things weren't given to us. Right? Should it be any different for the preacher of a congregation? Remember how you would feel if you didn't receive pay increases or a descent salary to support your family? How would your preacher feel if he hadn't received a raise after years of faithful service and handwork? Would he feel appreciated and cared for by the members of the congregation in which he labored with? It would be difficult to see their appreciation.

Sadly today many preachers live on a salary that is at or below poverty level. When at this level the preacher's children will receive free or discounted lunches at school. However, many because they don't want to make the brethren "look bad" will deny such programs and pay full price. Notice that attitude when compared to some brethren today. If a congregation isn't able to pay a preacher a salary that he needs to provide for himself and his family, then is it too much for the congregation to help the brother find outside support so that he and his family do not have to suffer while laboring with you.

We should not have to pay outrageous amounts for a person to come preach and labor with a congregation, but that brother shouldn't have to suffer for his labors in the kingdom. An honest question to ask many times is: "Would I be happy with that salary in his situation?" If the answer is no then we need to do help the brother in that situation. So many times individuals feel as if the brother only works four hours a week! How would we feel if after spending hours preparing lessons, bible class materials, visiting the sick, trips to the hospital, bible studies, writing bulletin articles, setting up and performing bible studies, and other tasks that the preacher often performs around the congregation; how would we feel if the brethren took such a "whatever" attitude toward the work that you had done? It hurts! It hurts the brother who is working with the congregation; it hurts his wife, his family and his attitude toward doing the work of the Lord's church.

The preacher as well as others in the congregation are worthy of receiving wages for there tasks that they perform. Let us not grow "cold hearted" in the idea of paying people for doing things, but give them what is due for such tasks. A preacher should never "Preach to live, but live to preach". This attitude would be hard to maintain when the brethren feel as if they shouldn't have to pay him anything more than they absolutely have to. It's sad when a brother feels nervous about driving up in a new car. Isn't he entitled to the ability to buy things to provide for his family? Let's not focus on the dollar signs in the treasury, instead let's keep our

brethren comfortable, not hurting, but able and willing to do the work without worrying if the brethren appreciate him and his works. Showing our brethren with the pay they receive is just one way we can show our appreciation to them, there are others. However, this is one area that so many are laxed. Let's give the laborer what is due and not "muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain".