



April 2018

A prospective missionary recently brought up a very good question. She asked, “Where did raising support originate? Is it even biblical?” This reflects a great concern among those who are considering missions these days. As I interact with people, I am noticing that the idea of raising support for missions is truly a difficult hurdle to cross as they count the cost and seek God’s leading. Therefore, I would like to spend a few of these *Serve* editions considering this topic.

Is support raising biblical?

Back to my friend’s question. While admittedly our American model of missionaries travelling from church to church to seek those that can partner with them is a human model in some respects, the idea of gospel workers being supported through others’ gifts is a biblical concept. We could mention passages that argue that a worker is worth his wages (Mt. 10:10) or that gospel workers have the right to financial support (1 Cor. 9:4-14). However, the clearest to me is the relationship described between Paul and the Philippian church.

Not until you reach the end of Paul’s letter (Phil. 4:10-20) do you learn that the Philippian church supported Paul financially. Knowing that now, go back and read Philippians 1:3-11. This passage illuminates the bond that existed between them and why Paul would speak so endearingly to them with great thanks. Because of their prayer, emotional, and financial support, Paul speaks to them lovingly and in words describing true partnership in gospel ministry. This is all the more evident as you return to 4:10-20. You see more of Paul’s

thoughts regarding how this concept of “raising support,” is a spiritual and legitimate partnership in doing the work of missions.

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A concern for fruitfulness and God's glory

I encourage you to read and reread these passages. Notice how important Paul considered his relationship with these partners. He took communication with them very seriously, and he honestly conveyed his needs and motives. However (and this is important), his aims were his partners' spiritual fruitfulness and the glory of God. Paul wasn't seeking support in a selfish way or purely on a human level. As God was the one calling him to minister the gospel in unreached areas, so was God the One to whom these supporters were giving, as an act of worship and a response to His grace.

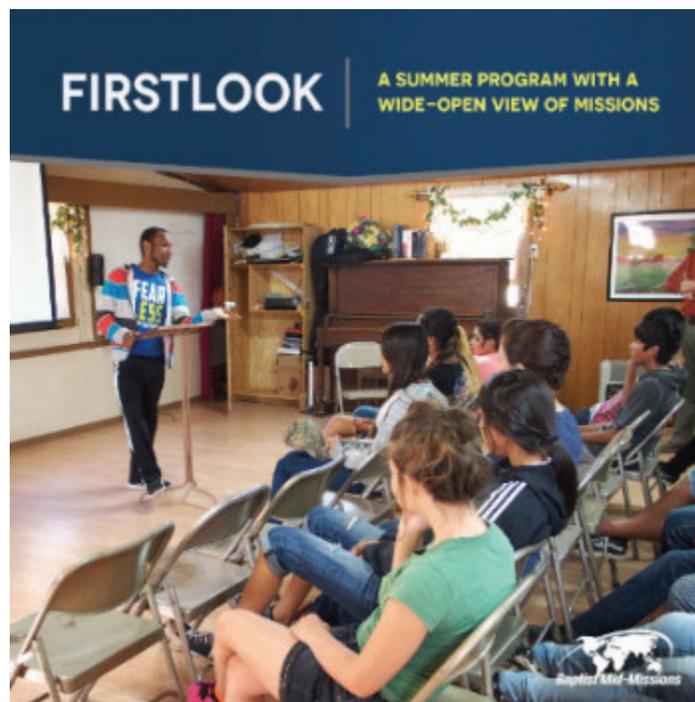
Not only do we see the financial support of missionaries in the Bible, but we also understand it more deeply and clearly as a spiritual work and a partnership with others that is ultimately a fellowship in the gospel. Understanding this helps take away some of the fears and awkwardness associated with raising

support.

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The FirstLook program provides college students with the opportunity to visit and live with missionaries, with the express purpose of exposing them to the day-to-day life of a missionary. To learn more [click here](#).





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