

DELIVERANCE OUTREACH TEMPLE CHURCH
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Benevolence Fund

Policy and Guidelines

Deliverance Outreach Temple is in the charity business. We are commanded by God to help the poor, the sick, and the wounded. But we also must abide by tax rules designed to prevent abuse. This written policy is designed to explain our benevolence program according to both the Scriptural mandate and the tax rules.

The mission of the Deliverance Outreach Temple Church includes the following: To minister, as within our capacity, to the needs of our membership and of our neighbors.

Benevolence is identifying and meeting the needs of individuals that they cannot meet themselves. We must document in writing all benevolent expenditures that meet both requirements.

The term “need” remains undefined in the tax authorities. So, churches usually resort to the dictionary when they must define “need.” Webster’s dictionary says that “need” equals “necessity.” **Necessity usually includes food, housing, clothing, medical emergencies and utilities.** The church cannot help with transportation or auto repairs and a myriad of other things that we have historically done on a regular basis. The church cannot make loans to the pastor, members, or others.

Deliverance Outreach Temple maintains a discretionary fund for benevolence. The fund is budgeted on an annual basis and will be approved within the budget. **The Church will use extreme caution when the benevolence payment is regular. The limit for each transaction will not exceed \$ 150.00.** This practice will ensure that all members are afforded the same opportunity during the fiscal year.

Purpose of this Document

- 1) Establish and outline an objective, unbiased process for the evaluation of requests for assistance from the Benevolence Fund.
- 2) Provide written eligibility requirements and criteria for receiving assistance from the Benevolence Fund.
- 3) Describe the request, approval and disbursement process.

Biblical Basis

The policies and guidelines set forth in this Benevolence Fund Policy shall be guided and directed by the following Biblical principles:

- 1) But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:17)
- 2) They (James, Peter and John) only asked us (Paul and Barnabas) to remember the poor – *the very thing I (Paul) also was eager to do.* (Gal 2:10)
- 3) And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, *as anyone might have need.* (Acts 2:44-45)
- 4) Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging *for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,* (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)
- 5) Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Galatians 6:9-10)
- 6) Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows *in their distress*, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:27)

The Elders and Deacons of Deliverance Outreach Temple Church affirm these principles and, by God's grace and for His glory, commit to be guided by them as we exercise faithful stewardship of the money entrusted to us for the purpose of ministering and providing benevolence to individuals or families in need of assistance.

The Deacons, under the oversight of the Elders, shall have responsibility for overseeing the administration of the Benevolence Fund and the Biblical stewardship of the money held therein.

The Deacons shall determine who will receive disbursements from the Benevolence Fund, in what amount, and for what duration. The Deacons shall give a regular accounting to the Elders of all contributions to and disbursements from the Benevolence Fund.

Source of Funding

The Benevolence Fund shall receive income from two sources:

- 1) Through the receipt of special contributions by individuals and/or families wishing to make a donation to the Fund (members of the church are not encouraged to contribute to the Benevolence Fund in lieu of regular giving to the General Fund of the church); and
- 2) Through the allocation or transfer of funds from the General Fund when deemed necessary and appropriate by the Deacons upon approval of the Elders.
Contributions to the Benevolence Fund in the form of a check should be made payable to “Deliverance Outreach Temple Church”, with a notation that the funds are to be placed in the DOT Benevolence Fund.

Contributions to the Fund

The leadership of Deliverance Outreach Temple Church exhorts members to minister directly to other members of the congregation as they become aware of specific needs. However, gifts made *directly* by a member to a needy individual or family are not tax-deductible under IRS regulations.

In order to comply with IRS regulations concerning charitable contributions, all gifts to the Benevolence Fund must be unconditional and without personal benefit to the donor.

Contributions to the Benevolence Fund may *not* be earmarked or otherwise designated for particular purposes or recipients. The leadership of Deliverance Outreach may choose, at its discretion, to decline certain contributions that are designated or earmarked.

Donors making contributions to the Benevolence Fund subject to these conditions may be able to deduct their contributions if they itemize deductions on the federal income tax return. The leadership of DOT recommends that donors consult their individual tax advisor or CPA concerning the appropriate tax treatment of contributions they make to the Fund.

Recipients of Assistance

In order of priority, recipients of assistance from the Benevolence Fund shall be:

- 1) Members of Deliverance Outreach Temple Church
- 2) Regular attendees of Deliverance Outreach Temple Church
- 3) Members of the community

Intended Purpose and Limits of Assistance

The stated purpose of the Benevolence Fund is to minister to individuals or families during a time of hardship or crisis by temporarily assisting them with their basic needs. Depending on the circumstances, assistance **will also include financial counseling**, training in household on budgeting and/or debt management, or other financial education that would help the individual or family avoid potential hardships or crises in the future.

Generally, assistance from the Benevolence Fund is intended to cover an individual's or family's basic needs. **The dollar amount will not exceed \$150.00.**

Needs that may *not* be met by the Benevolence Fund include:

- Business investments, business debts, or anything that brings financial profit to the individual or family
- Paying off credit cards.
- Needs of individuals who are wanted by the law or for paying fines as a result of breaking the law
- Housing for unmarried couples
- Legal fees arising from criminal behavior
- Gambling debts
- Penalties relating to late payments or irresponsible actions
- School tuition or fees

This list is not intended to be exhaustive; instead, it is intended to provide general guidelines in determining the type of expenses not covered by benevolent assistance.

Guidelines for Disbursement

The Benevolence Fund is intended as a source of last resort, to be used when the individual or family requesting assistance has explored all other possibilities of assistance from appropriate sources (i.e., family, savings, investments, etc). It is intended to be a means of assistance during the time of a crisis or other hardship. Generally, assistance from the Benevolence Fund is intended to cover an individual's or family's basic needs. **The dollar amount will not exceed \$150.00.**

Disbursements from the Benevolence Fund may not be made in the form of a loan.

Under no circumstance is assistance from the Benevolence Fund to be considered a loan. No gift may be repaid, either in part or in full, in money or in labor.

Those requesting assistance must be willing to receive financial, family, or other appropriate Biblical counseling. **The Deacons will not provide help to anyone who, in their estimation, will have negative or irresponsible behavior reinforced by the financial assistance.**

Those requesting help must be willing to grant the Deacons permission to follow up on any of the information provided to them. The Deacons will be sensitive to confidentiality issues. To the extent possible, and at the discretion of the Deacons, **all disbursements from the Benevolence Fund shall be made directly to the party or entity to which payment is due and not in the form of cash given directly to the individual or family requesting assistance (e.g., if assistance with rent or a mortgage payment is needed, payment shall be made directly to the individual or family's landlord or mortgage holder).**

Application and Approval Process

Individuals or families seeking assistance from the Benevolence Fund shall follow the steps below:

- 1) Obtain and submit an Application for Assistance from the Deliverance Outreach Temple Church Benevolence Fund (along with all supporting documentation).
 - 2) Complete interview(s) and/or appropriate counseling with the Deacons.
 - 3) Provide all additional documents and information requested by the Deacons.
- Review and approval of the Application, as well as communication of the amount and form of assistance, shall be done by the Deacons at the earliest practicable date.

Timothy W. Grant Sr.
Senior Pastor/President

Benevolence Request Form

When a church assists church members or other individuals, the IRS requires the church to keep certain documentation and records on individuals the church has helped. This form should be filled out each time the church helps a person financially. This confidential form should be kept with the church's financial records.

Name of Applicant_____

Street Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

PhoneNumber_____

Brief description of assistance provided by the church:

Reason the assistance was granted:

Cost of the assistance:

Relationship to the church members or church leaders: _____

If the applicant was related, did the applicant receive special treatment?

Benevolence Committee Members:

Applicants for financial assistance are awarded financial assistance based on financial need. Applicants are not granted financial assistance based on relationships between the applicant and church leaders or significant church contributors.

The church does not discriminate applicants based upon race, color, sex, national origin, age, geographic territory, or disability.

However, the church reserves the right to discriminate based on religion. The church benevolence committee may provide short-term (emergency) assistance and longer-term aid to ensure that victims have the basic necessities such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and medical assistance (including psychological counseling).

The preferred method of providing assistance will be to pay the applicant's needs directly to a business provider.

The type of aid that is appropriate depends on the individual's needs and available resources.

This document is intended to provide churches, pastors, and staff with current and accurate information about the subjects covered. However, such information is not intended to be sufficient for dealing with a particular legal problem, and the authors and distributors do not warrant or represent its suitability for such purpose. The reader should not rely upon this document as a substitute for independent legal consultation or IRS instructions.