

Benevolence Giving

Policy and Process



VERSION 1 – APPROVED BY CHURCH COUNCIL ON 3/8/2022

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it’ – when you have it with you.” **Proverbs 3:27–28**

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” **Galatians 6:9–10**

“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” **1 Thessalonians 5:14**

Heart of the Policy

At Hope Valley Church, our desire is to be ready to disburse the resources of the church to care for the needs of those whom we have the opportunity, proximity, and capacity to aid – yet with wisdom and diligence, so that we can be reasonably sure that any aid we provide is for a genuine need and not enabling to destructive and unwise behaviors in the people we assist. The intent of any benevolence giving is to provide aid for the immediate stability of an emergent situation, not to provide long-term care or solutions, which are the domain of other types of assistance. Because we know that God instructs us to help our neighbor, we desire to be ready to help any potential person whom we have the opportunity to aid – but especially to help those who are in committed church relationship, who give of their own time, resources, and money to the work of the church. We believe that the relationship and mutual support within the community of believers is God’s design for bringing sustainable stability to our lives, and so an encouragement – and in some cases a requirement – to engage in the relationship of the church must always be a key element of any assistance we provide.

The Policy

- **How we determine who will receive aid** The following questions must be considered according to the following categories of people requesting / needing aid:
 - **MEMBERS / REGULAR ATTENDERS**
 - **Defined as** people who are in regular relationship with Hope Valley Church, regularly attend church gatherings, and are noted for giving their own time, resources, and/or money to the work of Hope Valley Church **NOTE:** *Hope Valley Church will not get into the business of attempting to determine what percentage of a person's income they are giving to the church.*
 - **Considerations:**
 - Has this person received aid before? If yes, how often and/or recently?
 - *If this person has received recurring aid for this or other issues, there should be conversation and collaboration with the person about finding more long-term solutions, prior to providing additional aid.*
 - Has this person demonstrated trustworthiness and honest assessments of situations and circumstances?
 - *If the answer to this is unclear or negative, then documentation and more proof of the stated need must be requested prior to deciding to provide aid.*
 - **PERIPHERAL ATTENDERS**
 - **Defined as** people who are in occasional attendance or have rare contact with Hope Valley Church.
 - **Considerations:**
 - The same considerations listed above for Members/Regular Attenders apply, plus:
 - Why is the person making contact now? How was the need identified?
 - What has caused this need?
 - *For example: if the individual's need is a utility bill, a conversation must happen with the person to explain why they cannot afford to pay the bill, as well as an evaluation (between church Elders and Leaders) about the apparent legitimacy of their explanation.*
 - What documentation/evidence can the person provide for their stated need?

- *If they have no evidence or are unwilling to provide it, this should be weighted against the decision to provide aid, if not to deny the aid altogether.*

○ **NON-ATTENDERS / NO RELATIONSHIP WITH HOPE VALLEY**

- **Defined as** people who have no relationship with Hope Valley Church or attendance history, or who have just recently entered relationship with Hope Valley Church
- **Considerations**
 - **NOTE:** This is the least likely group to receive aid from Hope Valley, due to the low degree of relationship/contact and the high risk associated with the difficulty in assessing the legitimacy of their need. Because these people have no established relationship with Hope Valley, the considerations for Members/Regular Attenders do not apply – however the same considerations listed above for Peripheral Attenders do apply, plus:
 - What other assistance has the person received from other churches or organizations? What is “the plan” after this assistance is provided?
 - *There must be an effort to determine if the person is just “making the rounds” through the available resources in the community to enable their present destructive behaviors, rather than having a desire to stabilize their lives to facilitate change to their circumstances.*
 - Are there other churches/organizations/agencies that can better provide the stated need / better equipped to determine the legitimacy of the stated need?
 - *It is possible that the need is genuine, and yet Hope Valley is not the best option for the aid that is needed.*

• **The rules and guidelines for disbursing aid**

○ **Authorization for disbursement**

- **A monthly allotment of \$250 in benevolence aid is left to the discretion of the Senior Pastor**
 - If a request exceeds this amount, or if a request would bring the total benevolence disbursement for a given month above \$250, then the request must be approved by a majority council vote.
 - Council votes and approval may happen through electronic communication and must be added to the following council meeting minutes if approved outside of the monthly Council meeting

- **Cash / Check / Direct Deposit** or any other form of giving money directly to the person or family receiving aid, is strictly prohibited. Under no circumstances should cash be given to, or a check be written to, the person or family receiving aid.
 - Exceptions:
 - Gift cards – if deemed appropriate due to a temporarily ongoing need (e.g. gas money to cover a “week’s worth” of gas) a gift card may be purchased and provided to the person/family in need to provide funds that are nevertheless restricted to the category of need that has been identified
- **Any money payments or disbursements** should be made directly to the group or entity requiring payment (e.g. a disbursement being made to cover someone’s electric bill should take place in the form of a payment from Hope Valley Church directly to the electric company per the provided copy of the electric bill)
 - *At no time should a person requesting aid be given money on the good faith that they will then use the money to pay such a bill or other such thing.*
- **In any situation where the need is material** rather than financial, Hope Valley must endeavor to purchase/provide the materials rather than disburse money.
 - *e.g. If the aid being provided were for groceries, then a representative of Hope Valley with purchasing authorization and provide them to the person/family in need, rather than provide the family with a gift card or cash to go buy groceries for themselves*
 - **Items that can be purchased and provided:** necessary items such as food, medication, clothes
 - **Items that must not be purchased:** alcohol, drugs, weapons, illegal items or items deemed by Hope Valley to be superfluous or unsafe.
- **Donations of materials/items will take priority over purchasing items or financial disbursements.** A good faith effort must be made to determine what donation resources are available prior to purchasing items or materials.
 - *Materials/items should only be purchased if that option is determined to be the better option (due to availability or condition of donatable goods).*
- **The Benevolence Record form must be completed and filed for each instance of benevolence giving.**
 - The form is not required where aid is provided by locating available resources that do not require the disbursement of church money or property.
 - The form is required for disbursements in any amount, whether the disbursement required specific Church Council approval or not.

- All information fields on the form must be filled out.
- A receipt or documentation of purchases/disbursements must be attached to the form.
- The form requires two signatures which must be the combination of any two church Elders, Council members, or Pastors that are not related to one another through family or marriage.
 - This signing may take place via electronic or in person signature
 - The signing and filing of this form must be completed within 30 days of the disbursement taking place