



SERVANT OF NATIONS Benevolence Fund Policy

Scriptural Foundation:

The Scriptural Foundation for Benevolence at SON can be found in Matthew 25:37-40 where Jesus himself charges the Church to do for the “least of these brothers of mine” as a form of serving Jesus.

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Scriptural Support:

The Book of Acts mentions the extraordinary love and unity among the first Christians. In Acts 2:44, 45, we read:

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”

In Acts 4:32-35, these Christians continued their generous display of love and care for one another. Their care for the needy became so extensive that money and goods had to be brought directly to the apostles for effective distribution.

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.”

The believers' remarkable love for one another continues to be evidenced in Acts 6:1-4, as seen in their efforts to minister to widows and the selection of disciples to facilitate a benevolence ministry.

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will

turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

As in SON and Churches around the nation, the Apostles/Pastors need to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Our Corporate Support will have an administrative elder and deacons whom will provide loving service to needy brothers and sisters in Christ through Inside Ministries Benevolence.

Definition and Purpose of Benevolence Ministry and Fund

Benevolence is defined as an act of kindness or generosity. SON will provide for the basic necessities of life to needy persons. While money is available, the Benevolence Ministry will be supported by SON to provide basic life necessities to those persons who are truly in need.

We at SON seek:

1. To provide an opportunity for the Church to be God's channel of blessing to the needy and be the instrument God uses to *"help them win in life."*
2. To encourage a spirit of compassion and caring for the needy.
3. To teach the recipients to depend on Him more fully as they trust God to provide for their needs and to indeed *"win in life"* by taking action that leads to long term or sustained growth.
 - a. Applicants will be:
 - i. Invited to attend SERVANT OF NATIONS Church, if not members;
 - ii. Required to complete and go through a goal-oriented plan of action that includes:
 1. Engage in ongoing supportive relationship with a Deacon or Elder and assigned mentor from the cell.
 2. take financial counseling or a finance course offered by the Church or with assigned mentor
4. To provide for the collection, distribution, and proper management of the money and goods and services contributed to the needy.

Benevolence Fund Criteria

1. ***SERVANT OF NATIONS will primarily provide financial assistance for rent/mortgage, electricity, gas, and water to ensure service is not cut off.***
2. ***SON will also provide food through its food pantry connections and make referrals to places where clothing, shelter and other types of assistance may be provided.***

Note: Persons not meeting the criteria above might receive consideration on a case-by-case basis. The Benevolence ministry may consider and develop a plan for how assistance can be provided with clothing, medical care, transportation, critical repairs and other types of special projects and assistance to the poor or destitute.

Recipients Eligible for Benevolence

Who do we want to help?

1. Members of SON or those who regularly attend a cell group.
2. Oikoses of those who are members of the cells.
3. People who are widows, orphans, poor who lives in the Houston Metropolitan area who come to us for assistance.
4. Those who are in emergency or critical crisis.

What are the guidelines for intake?

1. We will offer more than one-time help but each request will be reviewed on its own merits. History of prior help will be considered to ensure fair and equitable distribution of benevolence for all persons requesting assistance.
2. Persons requesting aid will be required to fill out an application.
3. Persons requesting aid must be at least **18** years of age. Persons less than **18** years will be required to get a parent or guardian to request the aid.
4. The request must fit the criteria and categories for which the Church will help with benevolence.
5. Persons not meeting the criteria above might receive consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Internal Process for Receiving Applications

The primary point of contact is the cell leader or cluster leader. The person may request an application from the church administrator staff or may complete the application online. Completed applications are submitted to the Benevolence Committee with approval from the cluster leader.

In cases, where people come directly to the administrative elder, they will be directed back to the cluster leader to initiate the application process. Many issues (including financial and life skill mentoring) should be resolved first within the cell or cluster level before initiating the application process. A cell should incorporate prayer for the need and for God's miraculous provision as part of its strategy to deal with a need.

The congregation pastor and administrative elder are resources available to the cluster leader for additional assistance. Regardless, the cluster leader needs to share and communicate these issues with the congregation's pastor.

The cluster leader (along with the cell leader) is ultimately responsible to assess the "real" need of the individual. They should assess the situation and try to identify the real need and the real problem originating that need.

- What is the origin of this need? Is it because of a sin, a bad habit, a debt? Or is it because of unemployment, suddenly sickness, major change in life, divorce, death, etc.; or is it due to a testing time sent by God?
- How is the heart of the person in need? Is this person unrepentant, rebellious, stubborn, angry, etc.? Or is he/she willing to change habits, to repent, to forgive others, to receive advises and mentoring to overcome the problem that originated the situation?

An exception for this requirement would be for people whose need is critical, such as in cases of sickness, death, or a sudden accident. The Church should be informed of this.

See Figure 1 - SERVANT OF NATIONS Benevolence Process Flow on page 5 for the benevolence process flow.

Note: The amount of Benevolence remaining in the Church fund is determined by the Deacon Finance Committee, in conjunction with the administrative elder.

Benevolence Ministry

The Benevolence committee is a group of Deacons that will meet to evaluate and determine the need and assistance that will be provided to individuals seeking benevolence of value in excess of \$50.

All benevolence must be issued within the allocated annual budget for benevolence.

Distribution of Benevolence

The response time for the Benevolence Ministry for a request is 7 days from receipt of application, unless emergency dictates otherwise. Food gift certificates can be issued in accordance with policy. The Finance Deacon Staff (or designee) can approve benevolence with value of \$50 or less for those needs arising from individuals who are not members of the Touch Family cell or congregation. Benevolence can only be provided if there are enough resources in the Benevolence fund.

Supporting Benevolence

The Benevolence fund is supported by the donations of the Cells members, Cluster, Congregations and City Church. Five percent of the tithes will be designated to the benevolence fund. Several times a year there will special offerings collected solely for the purpose of providing benevolence to those who are in need.

Touch Family Benevolence Process Flow

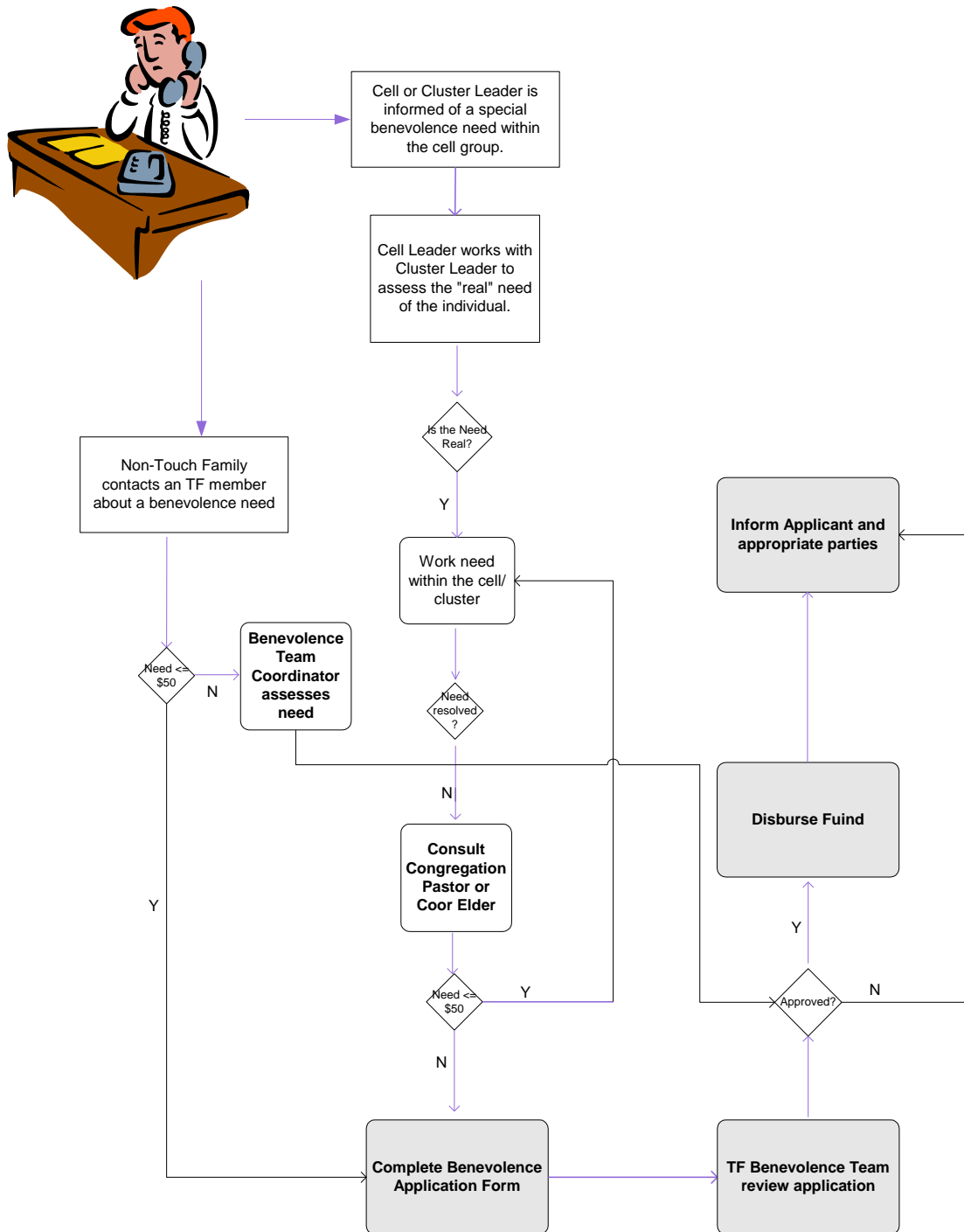


Figure 1 - SERVANT OF NATIONS Benevolence Process Flow is developed upon the Touch Family one, which was developed by the Touch Family Elders.

