

The Service? The Fellowship? The Contribution? The Church?

By Joshua Stucki

Acts 2:42 reads, “⁴²They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and ^[a]to prayer.” (NASB)

Romans 15:26 reads, “For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the ^[a]saints in Jerusalem.” (NASB)

2 Corinthians 9:13 reads, “Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your ^[a]contribution to them and to all,” (NASB)

Pluck out “fellowship” from Acts 2:42. Then “contribution” from Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 9:13. Do you know what they share in common?

They are all words from the same root word in the Greek, “koine”. Koine means “together, common, participate, contribute, give, or serve.” It is the most common word used to describe the church and its many functions in the New Testament. With the verses that contain “koine”, we can ascertain what we already know about the weekly assembly:

- 1) Comes together on Sunday (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
- 2) Shares its faith in common (Jude 1:3)
- 3) Communes together with the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23-34)
- 4) Offers prayer of praise and supplication (1 Thess. 5:17)
- 5) Sings psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16)
- 6) Contributes to the assembly in service and offerings (Rom. 15:26, 1 Cor. 16:1+2, 2 Cor. 9:13)

The above verses are shared because there is a common misconception that floats around in many churches: that offering can be with time or money, but one can be substituted with another. This is not supported by Scripture:

1 Corinthians 16:1 says, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.” (NASB)

The same Greek for collection, “logeias”, is also used in the next verse. Logeias is not used *anywhere else* in the Bible but these two verses, so we can be certain it is a separate idea from “koine” and definitely means to take up a financial collection at the assembly, just as it was done in Corinth and Galatia (as the verses mention).

Nonetheless, to limit “koine” to just service would do the meaning injustice. “Koine” clearly means “to give financially” in Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 9:13. A Christian’s service, or koine, includes giving financially, and a Christian’s offering, or logeias, does even if their service does not! In fact, it could be argued from Jesus (Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:42) that a tithe should be the de facto gift from a believer to the work of the assembly, under the authority of the elders (Hebrews 13:7, 17), and Paul’s commands are a gift beyond that amount. But I digress.

These proofs are not offered to shame anyone who cannot give but the widows’ two mites (Luke 21:1-4). The above verses and explanations of their original meanings are offered to remind us that our weekly assembly (Hebrews 10:25) includes our service (fellowship), communion, and prayer (Acts 2:42) along with our giving (Romans 15:26, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 9:13). The above are inseparable to Christian faithfulness. If a person tries to argue that they can “tithe” with their time and not their contribution, they err Scripturally. Both “Koine” and “logeias” undeniably mean to give financially. Our service is a given.