

Volunteer Compensation Policy

Jesus set the example that all believers should have a servant's heart (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:25). He came not to be served, but to serve, and His disciples are also called to serve one another humbly in love" (Galatians 5:13). In fact, Paul wrote that "we are [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

While all of God's people are called to serve, God calls some of His servants into full-time or paid positions of ministry in the church as is described in 1 Corinthians 9:8-14: "For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.' Is it about oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Surely, he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ¹² If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."

Those who serve in the church as volunteers are equally vital parts of the body as each one does his or her part (Ephesians 4:16), but not all of God's servants should expect compensation for their service (Luke 17:10). Rather, God's people should remember Paul's instruction: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV).

While all of God's people look forward to hearing Jesus say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21), it is appropriate for those in leadership to regularly thank those who serve and to and acknowledge their faithful service to the Lord and His church. The following policy outlines such acknowledgement for ministries at First Missionary Church:

1. The Board of Elders has the authority, as finances are available, to direct the church treasurer to give monetary or other tangible gifts of appreciation for those whose service is deemed worthy of special recognition.
2. Similarly, those who are in positions of leadership within the church are encouraged to remember, encourage and thank those who are serving under their leadership, such as youth ministry, children's ministry, Sunday School, etc. If it is possible to fund monetary or other gifts of acknowledgement from an already designated fund (for example, the youth ministry account), that is preferable, but if other funding is needed, ministry leaders may make a request to the Board of Elders.
3. Ministry leaders are never obligated to pay for expenses related to their area of ministry out of their own pockets. If funding is needed for curriculum, fellowship, ministry projects, etc., the ministry leaders should make a request to the Board of Elders for immediate needs as well as for possible inclusion in the annual church budget. If a ministry leader chooses to donate money for ministry needs, that is certainly a blessing to the church as well as to the giver, but it is not an expectation, nor should it ever be a financial burden to the ministry leader.
4. Likewise, those who serve as ministry leaders are not expected to pay for ministry expenses related to their area of oversight. For example, as a rule, if the youth group goes on a missions trip, the leaders or sponsors of the trip should not have to pay their own way. The costs of the leaders' and sponsors' participation should be figured into the overall cost of the trip and paid for out of the appropriate account. It is already a blessing to the church that these leaders serve; they should not be expected to pay to serve.