

**THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER AND THE LOCAL
CHURCH TO CARE FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY**

(Kaitia Combined Churches – 6/12/98 - EKB)

The responsibilities of the believer and the local church are:

1. To worship God in Spirit and truth, *Jn 4:23, Mat 4:10.*
2. To win the lost, *Lk 19:10, Ac 1:8, Mat 28:19.*
3. **To care for the poor and needy**, *Mat 25:35-40.*
4. To fellowship with believers and share Christ, *1Cor 10:16,17, Heb 10:25.*
5. To disciple, feed and build up other believers, *Col 1:28,29, Jn 21:15-17.*

God's command to the leaders of His people is expressed clearly in *Jer 22:3,15,16*. In *v16* the Lord adds that caring for the poor and needy brings God's blessing and is the way that we know Him.

Throughout God's Word **the command to care for the poor is repeated many times** as in:

<i>Deut 15:7-11</i>	<i>Deut 24:19-21</i>	<i>Ps 41:1-3</i>
<i>Ps 72:12-14, 82:3,4</i>	<i>Pro 14:31, 19:17, 21:13,</i>	<i>Pro 22:9,22,23</i>
<i>Is 58:6,7,10</i>	<i>Mat 25:34-40</i>	<i>Gal 2:10, 6:10</i>
<i>Jam 1:27, 2:15,16</i>	<i>1Jn 3:16,17</i>	<i>Ac 20:35</i>

The Hebrew and Greek words, which are translated "poor", have the meanings of: to become low, impoverished, oppressed, needy, weak, trembling, (from Young's Concordance).

God promises rich blessings on those who care for the poor.

<i>Deut 15:10</i>	The Lord your God will bless you in all your works.
<i>Deut 24:19</i>	The Lord your God will bless you in all you do.
<i>Pro 19:17</i>	Giving to the poor is lending to the Lord, and He will repay.
<i>Pro 22:9</i>	Giving to the poor brings the blessing of God.
<i>Ps 41:1-3</i>	Blessed by being delivered, preserved, blessed, kept, strengthened, sustained.
<i>Is 58:6-12</i>	16 major blessings come on those who care for the poor.
<i>Mat 25:34-36</i>	The ultimate blessing of inheriting eternal life.

God especially directs the preaching of the Gospel to the poor.

<i>Is 61:1</i>	The Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.
<i>Lk 4:18</i>	The Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.
<i>Lk 7:22</i>	The poor have the Gospel preached to them.
<i>Ac 10:38</i>	God anointed Jesus.....who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil.

Today in New Zealand, with the arrival of "Rogernomics", privatisation and cutting back on social welfare, the poverty of the poor appears to be on the increase. A market driven economy is not helping the poor. The motive of making a profit has replaced the aim to serve and help others.

Now the challenge to care for the poor and needy is placed in front of the believer and the local church.

In late August 1998, we were able to talk at length to a leader/organiser in a social welfare organisation and she told us that 80% of the people in that particular Northland town and district were on some form of benefit to be able to survive. Only 20% are able to earn enough to meet their own needs.

It seems that the “locusts” of *2Chr 7:13* are devouring the land:

unemployment No 1	marriage breakdown
poverty	hopelessness
hunger	despair – many tears
domestic upheaval	anger
family breakdown	frustration
teenage rebellion	oppression
arguments	drugs
want	crime
fears	imprisonment

But God is the ANSWER as in *2Chr 7:14*. He will turn it around if we will respond.

We are to target the poor with God’s Love and the Gospel.

At the moment many of the poor, unemployed, lonely, oppressed, needy, impoverished etc, think that God is unjust, unkind, unconcerned, uncaring, remote, inaccessible, not interested in them, as they struggle on through their trials each day. **But** as we go out to them and bring relief to their hardships, telling them plainly that it is because of Jesus, we are helping out, they will know that there is a God who loves and cares.

“Y2K” is close at hand, and there are believers who have researched carefully out in the secular world, who tell us to make reasonable preparations to carry us over a probably difficult period ahead. This will enable us to help others and share the Gospel of hope, (hold extra cash, light, fuel, food, water, cookers).