

Mercy Ministry Policy

Approved December 5, 2002

Purpose & Strategy

Vision of the Church

Northwest Bible Church is committed to passionately pursuing Christ by worshiping God through daily prayer and obedience, forming relationships through small groups, equipping members to serve worldwide with Christ's love, and by declaring the gospel to the lost. Part of fulfilling that commitment means participating in the real and urgent life needs of the church body and all they influence. In its desire to actively care for such needs, Northwest Bible Church sets forth the following Mercy Ministry Policy and committee as a guide in administering our Mercies Fund.

Biblical Basis

The Scriptural purpose of the Mercy Ministry is to act on the revealed truth of Jesus Christ who equated caring for those who are in real physical need with caring for Himself

Matthew 25:37-40 states:

Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

The purpose is to also actively care for the family of believers at NBC as a response to the gospel, in hopes that Jesus Christ would be revealed as the source of our care and in turn be exalted as Lord (Acts 2:42-47, Philippians 4:14-20, Philippians 2:25-28); to be merciful because God is merciful, and we are called to imitate such mercy (Luke 6:36, Micah 6:8); and to reach the lost with a taste of the mercy of God (Luke 6:35-36, Romans 2:4, 12:20/ Proverbs 25:21).

Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to share Christ's love in a tangible way and to insure that the church properly maintains this ministry through a special fund called the "Mercies Fund."

Flexibility of Policy

It is the expectation of the Elders and the Mercies Committee that policy will be followed. Exceptions to the Mercy Ministry Policy can be made, but will be recommended by the Mercies Committee and approved by the Elder Board.

Strategy

The Mercies Fund is to assist those faced with urgent short term financial needs, both inside and outside of NBC.

- Primary consideration for support goes to members of NBC
- Secondary consideration is given to attendees of NBC
- Other consideration is given to non-attendees who have been recommended for consideration by members or attendees.

This includes people in our community who walk in wanting financial assistance from a minister who is “on-call.” A staff member may send a request for financial assistance to the Committee when they discern legitimate need during an on-call ministry interview.

The fund acts as a safety net for those who have economic needs. The existence of financial need will be determined by the Mercies Committee and resolved within current fund restraints.

Mercies Committee

Committee Responsibilities

The Mercies Committee is a group of NBC members whose responsibility it is to administer the Mercies Fund, to provide biblical direction, and to verify the existence of the financial need. The need is brought to their attention by observation and a completed mercies request form.

The Committee is responsible to provide clear procedure, for the body at NBC to make requests for Committee review, and to communicate awareness of this ministry to the church body. The Committee is committed to operate with an attitude to minister to all individuals making requests. The Committee will provide a quarterly written report to the Elder Board, Senior Pastor, and Executive Pastor to account for activity in the fund and administration, communication, or ministry issues. The Committee will maintain the highest degree of confidentiality with any they serve. The Mercies Committee will meet on an “as needed” basis to deal with the needs that arise.

Member Responsibilities

Committee members shall: attend all Committee meetings if possible; commit to 3 years of service and be willing to serve 3 years or less; serve as a prayer partner with committee members for the ministry and those it supports; preserve confidentiality of those supported unless it would be destructive to the individual or others to do so; and

participate in every decision of the Committee unless unavailable for obvious reasons (travel, illness, etc.). Participation means a commitment to express a conviction to grant or not grant a request made. The Committee will act only when the Committee members reach a united consensus.

Membership

The Committee, made up of men and women, will be not less than 5 and no more than 10 in number, including an NBC staff member (usually the Community Care Minister) and the Chairman. New members of the Committee will be approved by the Elder Board. The Chairman is nominated by the Committee or the Elder Board and is approved by the Elder Board annually.

Selection

Current members of the Committee will identify candidate members for the Committee. Prospective Committee members will be men and women members of NBC. They are evaluated as to spiritual maturity, length of time attending NBC, membership, interest and commitment to mercy ministry, and availability for Committee and special called meetings. These names shall be compiled into a list, recommended by the Committee, and submitted to the Elder Board for approval.

Following Elder approval, the Committee Chairman will contact the candidate to determine their willingness to serve on the Committee. In these interviews the Chairman shall present the Mercy Ministry Policy and quantify areas of service and present ministry policy for the candidate. The new slate of Committee members should be identified and in place as soon as possible after the commencement of the new fiscal year. Married couples may serve together on the Committee.

Term of Service

The term of office for each Committee member shall be 3 years, with one-third of the members rotating off the Committee each year.

Financial Issues

Disbursements

Once the Committee approves financial support in response to a request, a Committee member shall contact the recipient to inform them of our decision and plan of action. The Community Care Minister will execute the disbursement to the payee or individual. The Community Care Minister is the keeper of records for all requests. Access to the Mercies records will be maintained with highest confidentiality by the Community Care Minister and will be accessible to the Committee, Elders, Senior Pastor, and Executive Pastor.

The church business office will handle all accounting according to the churches approved principles and practices. Checks for an individual's needs will be written to the payee (landlord, garage, utility, etc.) when possible. Exceptions will have to be approved by the

Mercies Committee. Since Mercies funds are a designated item, all Mercies Funds should not be utilized or transferred into any other NBC fund.

In unusual occurrences, the Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor may spend up to a monthly total of \$500 for on-call emergency mercy needs from the Mercies Fund.

Any expenditure over \$5,000 to an individual, recommended by the Mercies Committee, shall require the approval of the Elder Board. Cumulative financial support to an individual during a fiscal year is limited to \$5,000, any further requests on the Committee, during that time period, must be approved by the Elder Board.

Record Keeping

The Community Care Minister will be the point person for follow-up on all requests the committee has acted upon.

Review

Any financial assistance that has continued for a year needs to be reviewed by the Committee.

Designated Giving

The church encourages giving to the Mercies Fund. In the unusual occurrence of a designated event, the following applies:

Due to IRS constraints, designated gifts to the Mercies Fund for individuals or projects will not be accepted unless the need has been pre-approved by the Board of Elders as a designated project. In such cases where specific individuals are designated, a donor must give the church the freedom to use the gift for other needs at the discretion of the Elder Board or Mercies Committee.

Counseling Issues

The following is a restatement of the “Mercies Fund Counseling Subsidy,” dated December of 1989.

Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of counseling issues, the Mercies Committee will allow two Committee members to meet with the individual making a request. These members will represent the whole Committee. The entire Committee will see only the details necessary for deciding on financial support. Confidentiality is maintained unless there is threat of harm to the individual or others. If such threats exist the Committee will contact the appropriate authorities and staff members. The Mercies Committee will communicate the confidentiality clause to an individual requesting support for counseling during the review process.

First Step

Requests on the Committee for counseling will come with a staff member's recommendation. Financial support for counseling or assessment is granted for up to 4 visits with a local Christian counselor recommended by the staff. The Community Care Minister will follow up with the counselee or staff person after the initial visits.

Second Step

If there is a need for extensive counseling, the counselee may request more financial support from the Committee. At that time the Committee will have the appropriate staff member consult with the individual's counselor to determine the potential effectiveness of continuing the individual's counseling relationship. Financial support may be granted for further counseling, but is contingent on follow up and evaluation every 3 months. The counselee will be required to make some financial contribution each visit with the counselor during the Committee's period of support.