How Much for Missionaries?

Max and Jean Winters are going to meet the Phillips for breakfast next week. Jim and Elaine Phillips are missionaries in a central African country. They are back in the United States after their second three year period in the foreign mission field. They will spend a good amount of the time in the US securing funding for their proposed next time in the field.

The Winters have discussed the issue of continued financial support for the Phillips. They also felt that other members of their midweek group were facing similar decisions if not for the Phillips for other missionary teams. Their church has actively encouraged missionary support as a central pillar of its strategic plan for many years.

After Bible study time, Max comments, “We are supporting our church both in terms of meeting the annual operating budget as well as contributing to the church’s building fund. I see real evidence of the Lord’s work as we continue to expand our footprint in the community. With the Phillips in town, we are going to meet them next week. Among other things, obviously their hope is for us to continue meeting their financial needs. The difficulty we are facing is how to provide this support when several other new missionaries are seeking similar support. Furthermore, Jean and I are nearing retirement and have to think seriously who we should support. Realistically, we cannot support them all.”

Jean adds, “We are strong believers in tithing relative to our financial situation. Based on our current outlook, we want to continue our level of church-wide giving. Given that we fully agree with the over and above giving needed currently for our church expansion, we just don’t know how to handle the missionary giving issue.”

The Phillips are typical of the missionaries that Max and Jean have supported over the years. They are both in their late-30’s and have been in Christian education for over fifteen years. They have two children, ages 7 and 11. Initially they had some difficulty raising the necessary financial support. However, thanks in part to a major commitment from the Winters, they have been able to establish their ministry work in such a way that they feel they can devote themselves to a long term approach.

During the time the Phillips have been in their missionary location, several other couples within the same church have also decided to enter the foreign mission field and are seeking financial support. While the church leadership has urged members of the congregation to financially back missionaries, it has never made a policy of specifying individual mission teams.
You are in the same midweek group that the Winters are in. You are in a considerably different situation in that you are about the age of the Winters but have a growing family to consider. You have also committed to a tithing program and face a similar financial constraint as the Winters but for different reasons.

After some casual discussion of this topic, you suggest, “This is a topic we have never spent much time on as a group. Let’s prayerfully examine scripture over the next week to see what insight we can provide on how to meet our missionary needs but also recognize that we all have financial limits.”

**ASSIGNMENT**

As in many issues, Biblical insight should provide the basis for discussing this pressing issue that many Christians face as many churches attempt to expand their foreign missionary presence. What scriptures would you suggest for the group and, based on that set, how would you advise the group? Finally, how should the Winters address the Phillips’ needs when they meet?
My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: