

## **Ways to Help People Mature in Stewardship**

### **1. Make sure you are giving generously.**

God is always more interested in teaching the leader than having the leader teach the people. So, if you have not learned to give generously, your church will struggle financially until you learn this lesson.

### **2. Make sure your staff and leaders are giving generously.**

Likewise, if your leaders have not learned to tithe, God will teach them before He lets you teach your members. Consider not calling any leaders to your staff who are not already tithing to their local church.

Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota verifies the giving records of everyone they consider- for their Elder Board. You want people to handle your offering who are qualified to handle it well. Verify that a person is tithing before you allow them to join your accounting team.

### **3. Take a Christmas offering.**

Many churches have found that people will give above and beyond their normal giving around Christmas time. They are grateful for Jesus and some want to give extra at the end of the year.

If you want to receive a special Christmas offering, designate it to something that warms people's hearts: help for needy people, outreach to your community, toys for the children's ministry, a mission project, etc. That will help make your offering truly special, and more effective.

If appropriate in your culture, you might want to print a special Christmas envelope with the theme of the offering on it. "Reach one more person," or "Toys for Children," etc. Mail that envelope to members on Nov. 1, explaining what the Christmas Offering will go to this year

Mention it in church the first and second weekends in November. Let people know they can give their Christmas offering by mailing in their envelope, or by placing it in the offering any Sunday in December, or at the Christmas service, if they plan to attend.

During the month of December, weave the offering into each sermon. Mention the total that has already been given as it comes in. Encourage people to consider giving Jesus their best gift for Christmas. They will probably spend the most on the person they love the most. Encourage them to or at least match whatever amount they will spend for their closest loved one and spend the same for Jesus. After all, we are celebrating Jesus' birthday.

As soon as possible after Christmas, tell the congregation how much they gave for the Christmas offering. Inform the people about the results because they gave (souls saved, children happier because of toys, etc.)

### **4. Include testimonies or stories that illustrate what people are giving to.**

Sometimes churches don't give people enough time to prepare for their offering or help them understand why they are giving it. Take a few (perhaps 2 or 3) minutes to introduce the offering. Explain how people can give. Persuade them about why they want to give. Teach them what God says about giving. Show them how their gift is an investment in God's work, etc.

When possible, tell a story about what their giving has done in the past: the story of a changed life or a marriage saved. Ideally, have someone whose life was changed briefly tell their own story just before the offering.

## **5. Consider a test-the-tithe guarantee.**

Some churches offer a "tithe guarantee." After reading Malachi 3:10-11, the pastor says, "We believe so strongly in God's promise to reward you for tithing that we offer you a guarantee. Give your full tithe over these next 90 days. Give it so that we can track it (either by check, giving envelope, online, or automated). At the end of 90 days, if you feel that God has not blessed you, let us know. We will refund the entire amount of your tithe." Usually no one asks for a refund. Why, because God's promise to bless those who give is guaranteed.

Is this manipulative? If you think so, don't do it. But it certainly seems like this is the same kind of challenge God is giving when He says, "test me in this" in Malachi 3:10.

## **6. Enlist more volunteers.**

The vast majority of giving in your church comes from volunteers who are participating in ministry. On average, five out of ten attenders are givers. But, nine out of ten volunteers quickly become regular givers.

Note: Enlist volunteers by asking them personally. One out of 100 volunteers responds to an announcement from the pulpit. Nine out of ten people will agree to serve when asked personally.

## **7. Where possible encourage people to automate their giving.**

Where it is possible, encourage people to automate their giving. They can have their bank automatically send a check or direct deposit to the church bank account once or twice per month. Even the most careful tithers miss a tithe by accident once in a while. Encourage them to contact their bank about automating their giving

If giving cannot be automated electronically, how can you help people automate in other ways? Some churches have given tithing envelopes at the beginning of the year, dated for each week as a way to help people be reminded to give. What might work in your context?

## **8. When you teach on giving, give those sermons away the next week.**

Whenever you teach about financial stewardship, if possible have someone record that message. Make free copies available the following weekend. You want everyone who wants to read, hear, or watch the sermon many times.!

If a recording is not possible in your context, consider asking each member to share the message with someone else verbally. Or perhaps you could distribute printed copies.