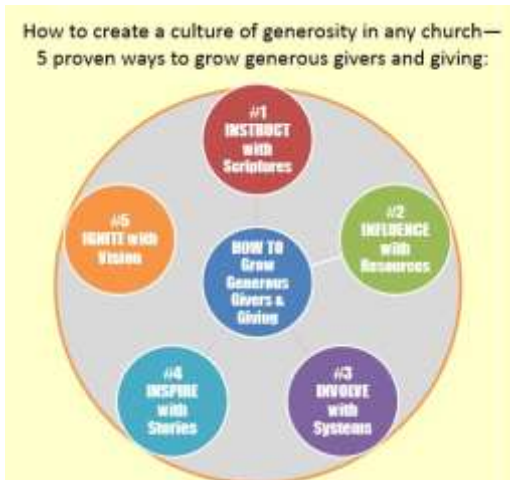


5 WAYS TO CREATE A GENEROSITY CULTURE IN YOUR CHURCH

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For a car to run well, all the pistons must be firing properly. For a church's finances to run well, all the generosity pistons must be firing well. But most churches today are struggling with the "Kluth Rule of 1/3rds on church giving: 1/3 of the giving records are blank, 1/3 show less than \$500/year, 1/3 show over \$500/year."

For a church to develop a generosity culture, they must understand the 5 spiritual pistons that are needed to help their church grow generous givers and giving. To create a generosity culture, the following 5 things are needed.

1. INSTRUCT with Scriptures

Generosity and financial teaching in a church should be about the Bible, not the budget, bills, or building. The budget is a spending plan, not the giving goal.

When I first came to my church as a senior pastor, the church hadn't made their budget in four years. I asked why we had a budget we never met, the treasurer said, "We are trying to teach people to give to the budget." I said, "Well, it's obviously not working and we need to change our focus. My goal will be to teach people to give to God based on the Bible, not the budget."

Using this approach, our giving went up nearly 90% and we exceeded our budget 9 of the 10 years I was the senior pastor. The only year we didn't exceed our general operating budget (we received 99%) was the year we raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra cash offerings for facility improvements.

2. INFLUENCE with Resources

A church must intentionally expose their people to resources that teach them Biblical truth about finances and generosity. This can happen through sermons, 1-2 minute videos in worship services, seminars, classes and small groups. But I have learned that the greatest way to influence all the families in a congregation is through written materials that are shared churchwide. Generosity devotionals, flyers, and cartoons

will have a powerful impact on people's thinking about generosity and their giving practices.

3. INVOLVE with Systems

Scripture says we are to "collect" people's financial gifts and offerings. For many years, the big debate was whether to pass the plate or have a box in the back to receive people's offerings. The answer today is, "Yes and more"!

Pass the plate, box in the back, EFT giving, online giving, iPhone app giving, kiosks or computer terminal in the lobby, stock brokerage account, and accepting gifts in kind are options a church can use to help people be faithful and generous givers. While very few churches will do all of these things, all churches need to do more of these things to help "collect" people's offerings.

4. INSPIRE with Stories

In the Bible, we have many examples of generosity stories. King David gave generously to the temple and his leaders followed David's example. Barnabas gave the proceeds from the sale of land to help the needy. A little boy's lunch helped feed 5,000 men plus the women and children. A widow's mite was noticed and commended by Jesus. A woman poured out an alabaster of perfume on Jesus' feet that was worth a year's wages. All of these are generosity stories. Stories move us and shape us.

5. IGNITE with Vision

Generous giving ultimately flows to need-meeting ministries with vision, not needy ministries. In Scripture, God released resources to big projects that were planned out and clearly communicated (Moses, Nehemiah, David, Paul). We are to bring God's love inside our four walls, outside of our four walls in our community, and around the world. Our financial goals and projects need to be worthy of people's support because we are making an impact on people's lives.

When your church is firing on all 5 of these generosity pistons, you will create a culture of generosity in your church. And, I will guarantee you will be amazed at the flow of resources that will flow to and through your ministry to bless a world in need. If God knows He can get resources through your church, He will get resources to your church.