

What's in the Offering Plate?

What's in the offering plate today? Your church's offering plate? Does it seem that the amount of cash and giving envelopes are lower than they once were? Even if the number of people are the same, and maybe larger? What's up with that?



Lower offering plate collections

is one of the byproducts of electronic giving. The Sunday receipts appear lower until they are counted and added to the direct transfers or even debit and credit card payments. When cash giving became written check giving, the offering plate was still the collection method. Not any longer. Electronic giving is digital, not physical, and it does not require the plate.

People who give electronically do not usually place anything in the plate. People who give electronically may be challenged with the offering as an act of worship, since they give another way. Is the offering for them still worship, still discipleship? Or is it becoming unrelated to their giving?

I think it is time to broaden the offering to encourage larger participation for that act of worship. I think it is time to facilitate a larger offering by using Gratitude Cards.

Designed and nicely printed in the church office, Gratitude Cards give people opportunity to write what they are grateful for and place the card in the offering plate. Gratitude Cards can be signed or not. They can include at the bottom a verse of scripture that the church selects. To begin the use of Gratitude Cards during the offering, pick a launch Sunday and prepare the congregation for two or three Sundays in advance. Place a picture of a card in the church newsletter, or mail out a card to everyone with an explanatory letter from the pastor.

The intent is to encourage everyone to worship during the offering by placing something in the plate, even a written note of gratitude for a particular blessing from the previous week or an anticipated blessing in the new week.

The cards should be collected and reviewed by the ministers and / or lay leaders. A monthly newsletter or bulletin insert can be prepared to include all the statements of gratitude from the previous month. This will demonstrate that people's statements are taken seriously.

The intent of this idea is to offer a way to keep the offering relevant for everyone, physical givers, electronic givers and even non-givers. And remember, gratitude is a motivating basis for generosity.

The Generosity Letter
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