



By Margaret Marcuson, ChurchCentral.com

Here are the best two ways I know to help people in your congregation become more generous.

First, **start with yourself**. Becoming a more generous person doesn't guarantee your people will follow, but you can only lead people where you are willing to go yourself. And it helps to create a sense of sufficiency in you which will help you be calmer in your leadership.

Here are some ideas I've been trying.

1. Giving bigger tips.
2. Giving my kids some extra money.
3. Giving money to someone on the street who asks for it without worrying what they will do with it.
4. Donating to a crowdfunding project I'd like to support.
5. Giving extra money to one or more of the ministries I already support.

What ideas do you have for being more generous?

Second, **ask** your people to give.

Many pastors I speak to are hesitant to boldly ask their members to give more. They are reluctant to preach about stewardship more often than once a year. They worry that people will think the church is always asking for money. They feel conflicted because the giving they ask for helps pay their salary. And they simply feel that talking about

money is somehow a distraction from their real ministry. I felt like this myself for many years.

But I learned to think differently about asking people to give. I came to believe that helping people deal with their money and become more generous *is* ministry. It's a critical part of pastoral ministry to individuals, and an essential part of leading a congregation.

Five reasons to ask people to give

Here are five reasons to ask people to give, and to ask more than once a year:

- 1. Many won't give unless you ask.** They weren't raised to give, and they are used to giving in response to an appeal by other groups.
- 2. Other groups, such as faith-based nonprofits,** do not limit their asking to once a year.
- 3. Asking regularly can increase giving,** which means more money for your church's ministry and more money to give away.
- 4. Giving can help your people grow spiritually.** Encouraging them to give is a real contribution to them.
- 5. Helping people let go of their money** can lead to greater freedom and sense of sufficiency.

What ministry could your church do if you and everyone else understood the gracious flow of money into and out of their lives, and supported ministry within and beyond your congregation?