

Why Do Your Members Give?

Is it true that every church member will respond to the same reason for giving? Is it true that every congregation's culture will support only one approach to developing generous givers? I know that neither statement is true.



If there are four gospels that portray the Good News in different cultural and historical contexts, then certainly there can be different gospels of good giving that resonate with the various attitudes and characteristics of members in congregations.

What are the top three reasons that people in your congregation give?

How can you know? And when you do know, what will you do?

Consider these possible reasons that people in your congregation give.

1. To give their fair share
2. To be a follower of Jesus
3. To care for and help people
4. To meet a membership requirement
5. To carry out the church's mission
6. To share the Gospel
7. To pay the bills and meet the budget
8. To experience community
9. To pay for the benefits one receives
10. To worship God

Now discover the top three reasons through the following exercise. Using the list of reasons above, or a list that you develop,

1. Compare reason #1 with reasons #2 through #10. Compare the reasons two at a time. Give a point to the winner of each comparison. Give a half point to each if there is a tie. Try very hard to avoid a tie.
2. Compare reason #2 with reasons #3 through #10. Continue to give points through all comparisons.
3. Compare reason #3 with reasons #4 through #10.
4. Compare reason #4 with reasons #5 through #10
5. You see the pattern. Continue the comparisons through reason #9.
6. Add up the points awarded to each reason. The three reasons with the most points are the top three reasons for giving.

First, do this exercise personally. What are **your** top three reasons for giving?

Second, invite the ministers to do this exercise.

Third, enlist the deacons, elders, council, or board do this exercise individually and share their results with each other. Then share the ministers' results with them.

Fourth, engage the remainder of the congregation in small groups or online and collect their results.

What did you learn? Are the reasons for giving the same across all groups: yourself, the ministers, the board, and the congregation? Are there differences? How do your giving appeals line up with the top reasons for giving from your congregation? If there is a gap, what will you do?