



Leading A Successful Capital Stewardship Campaign

OVERVIEW

What Do Successful Capital Stewardship Campaigns Have in Common?

A capital stewardship campaign is conducted at a specific season in a church's journey to fulfill a unique project that requires the need for additional funding. The program focuses on the specific capital needs of a church while also educating its people about the regular ongoing budgetary needs. The financial goals of the campaign are typically over and above a church's operating expenses and budget. As a result, the financial commitments asked of the church family are in addition to their usual giving efforts. With this in mind, the campaign will be asking church members to consider a multi-year commitment (typically 2-3 years) with a specific goal that will be established as the campaign is underway. By God's grace, your diligent effort and careful, prayerful attention to this church-wide effort will bear fruit far into the future.

#1 This is a Teaching Opportunity

Two foundational principles uphold this entire program: sacrifice and stewardship. One of your most critical tasks is to establish and nurture a Biblical perspective in your church and move them from concept to practice.

Teach Sacrifice

Unfortunately, many Christians misunderstand the term "sacrifice." They often view sacrificial giving –especially when it comes to money they desperately need – as a surrender of resources. Nothing could be further from the Truth. Sacrifice, understood simply, is an act of love. It is a loving gift, made to a worthy God, offered with a thankful heart.

We see acts of sacrifice routinely in our daily lives. Parents delay the purchase of a new car in order to pay for their son or daughter's college tuition. A young man gives up a month's pay to buy a diamond ring for his bride. A mother sets aside the lure of career to care for her small children. Such love exemplifies giving up something we treasure so that we may give to "Someone" we love more. It is one of our noblest callings as His children – and the most rewarding.

Teach Stewardship

Defined as the entrusted management and care of another's resources, faithful stewardship requires at its core a grateful humility. Your church must acknowledge the responsibility placed upon them to show themselves accountable to their Master. Part of "counting the cost" of being Christ-disciples is to take seriously our roles as caretakers and nurturers of all that He has provided to us, especially when that becomes inconvenient or unsatisfying to our flesh.

Proper stewardship implies protection, investment, renewal, and reward. It requires strategy and planning; it produces a heritage passed to those that follow. Training your church to think beyond "today" presents a sober challenge, flying in the face of a consumer culture that glamorizes convenience and gratification.

#2 Successful Church Campaigns Are Built on The Following Principles

The challenge of "reaching your people" with the scope and importance of the project and this program presents four distinct, measurable actions: inform, involve, pray, and act.

Inform

The vision must be articulated with a call to action. Experience shows that people will not give to something they do not understand. The degree to which the vision, and how to fund it, is clearly and consistently articulated will directly correlate to the "buy-in" at your church. Make every effort to engage the youngest to the oldest, as often as possible, in as many ways as possible, in discussion about why you're doing what you're doing.

Involve

Give committed church members the opportunity to take ownership and become engaged through involvement opportunities and activities. Effective leadership will encourage church-wide participation, especially in the area of service. You will promote unity and momentum by presenting opportunities for your church to come together as a community and to share equally in a bold vision for the future. Foster widespread involvement and you are likely to trigger a spiritual revival that accomplishes far more than monetary goals.

Pray

Members will not fully support a vague, unclear purpose. With good information, communication, involvement and understanding, your people will fully be able to pray for God's wisdom and understand how He is calling them to be a part of this project.

Naturally, you are covering this entire process in prayer. What we're addressing here is the responsibility of the individual (giver or family) to seek the Lord regarding His will for their specific commitment (financial and otherwise). As leaders, be proactive in setting the tone for what this looks like for your body. Model it, and talk about it. Once people understand the vision, and see how they can take ownership, they will be more inclined to pray about how God will use them and receive the glory through their obedience.

Sacrifice

True sacrifice, church-wide giving and participation can only be achieved after everyone accepts the challenge to pray and act. Taking action shows obedience. Encourage sacrificial giving, that which is "over-and-above" regular tithes and offerings. The phrase "Equal Sacrifice . . . Not Equal Gifts" will be used many times during the campaign training by your Impact Stewardship Consultant. It is important to understand what Biblical sacrifice means and what God is asking of all His servants.

#3 Help the Entire Church Family Understand Various Ways They Can Give

Four key categories illustrate how you can give:

Give out of income. While income is a logical place to start, our experience indicates that household budgets rarely have "extra" funds waiting to be allocated. Aside from redistributing savings, or tagging other "discretionary spending" monies, giving out of income is difficult to maintain over the course of the program.

Give appreciated assets. This category represents one of the best in which "creative gifts" can be found, yet it's one of the least explored. Stocks, bonds, and real estate purchased years ago frequently carry an appreciated value. Did you know you can give that asset directly to your church and avoid paying any capital gains tax, but still get a fair market value deduction based on its current value? A tax professional can guide your church through this process.

Give "stuff." You move it; you store it. You insure it and dust it. Collectibles (stamps, baseball cards, sports memorabilia, coins, etc.) and valuable heirlooms or antiques (jewelry, furniture, musical instruments, etc.) may be contributed to the church for sale.

Give by sacrifice. David, a "man after God's own heart," declared, "That which costs me nothing is not a sacrifice" (Acts 13:22, 2 Sam. 24:24). Challenge your people to give what they otherwise would spend - without a second thought - on a fast-food meal, or a cup of fine coffee. These real-world examples are almost universal to American culture and provide an opportunity for leaders to bring the principle of "denying oneself" to the forefront.

Realizing that some of the largest gifts received can be non-cash, it is vital to present opportunities for people to hear creative giving options. Plan to personally challenge them to think outside the box. There exist numerous additional methods by which people can contribute, many of which are simply unexplored in the minds of your givers.

The following two Biblical principles answer, in general terms, the question of “how much” to give:

Give proportionate to blessings received.

Scripture teaches that to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). Those blessed generously in financial ways have a greater responsibility to sow into the Kingdom accordingly.

Give by revelation, not by reason.

Pray and ask God what He wants to do through you, and expect an answer (John 10:27, John 5:19). Don't be frustrated or disobedient if you can't discern how you will produce that amount. Walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7), and make that your commitment.

#4 Enlistment is Very Important

Encourage church-wide participation

The campaign should seek to involve as many in the church as possible. A well-designed campaign offers a wide range of service opportunities. This is a time for your church to come together as a community, to share equally in a bold vision for the future and celebrate it. In your role, if you have the power to add more people to the effort, do it. Encourage participation and you will see a spiritual revival in your church that goes beyond the monetary goals.

One mistake many churches and campaign committees make is to restrict the stewardship campaign operations to just a few individuals. A far better choice is to divide the effort as widely as possible across a force of volunteers. This creates a vital sense of ownership and open participation, and it has the advantage of distributing the workload so that no one person feels overwhelmed or overworked. A church-wide volunteer effort also produces a much greater understanding of the purposes and details of the campaign, helping alleviate questions or doubts about the project and campaign goals.

The volunteer effort in this campaign is divided according to teams, which are headed up by various team coordinators. Certain Coordinators are responsible for recruiting volunteers to help with the duties of their specific team. Some teams may require only a few members, and others will need a relatively large membership. In some cases, the recruits must be selected according to a very specific list of skills and talents. The Program Manager will track the recruiting process to assist in both maximizing the number of people involved in the campaign and to minimize the amount of work falling to a handful of members.

Tracking Enrollment

Every coordinator who recruits a volunteer can submit their enlisted contacts by simply emailing the Program Manager with the name of the person being recruited, the name of the Coordinator who recruited him or her, and the team and position in which they will serve.

Successful Enrollment Strategies

It is absolutely imperative that every Coordinator give prayerful consideration for each position he or she seeks to fill. In general, the best way to enlist anyone is to make it easy for that person to say yes. Many people fear that they will be asked to talk to others about money. Reiterate that their responsibilities do not include talking about money and that they will never have to ask anyone in the congregation to give money. Also, reassure volunteers that this will not be the case at any point in the campaign. Remember, enlisting a person face-to-face is more effective than a phone call. Be positive and enthusiastic about the effort and how it will impact the church.