



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 2



Label up, eye on the ball. That is the advice that every Little Leaguer gets to start their career in baseball. It's the basics of batting. From that base, a coach works to develop other skills. Yet if you don't get label up, eye on the ball you will never get off the bench.

This is a label up, eye on the ball Stewardship Coach. Before I launch into a year of advice on how to increase giving and givers at your church, I want to spend the next two issues talking about the basics. For me, when it comes to helping churches meet their budget expectations, the first step is having a proper view of the offering. Therefore, the next two editions of the Coach are entitled, ***The Anatomy of a Great Offering.*** This is Part 1.

Boring. Let's face it. Most offering times in the typical church are dry and boring interruptions to the worship service. We treat it as if it is in the way of more important stuff. It's as if we are embarrassed to have to do this but... Is it any wonder that giving is in decline?

If you can't get the offering right, you will always struggle financially. A church's approach to the offering, and how they collect the offering, is the base for all you do in terms of generosity. Your Sunday morning offering sets the pace for everything you do generosity related. If you can't get the offering right, you won't get anything else right when it comes to giving.

In my over 20 years of helping churches increase giving and givers, I have found that,

Putting positive attention to the offering time is both the easiest thing to do to increase giving and, also, the hardest thing to pull off.

Why is it hard to put attention to the offering time? Believe it or not, I find a church staff is often the leading reason why generosity is so poorly done. Why is that?

1. The typical church staff thinks that any talk about money will turn people off and away. They won't admit it, but the typical staff is more interested in the number in attendance than they are the number in the offering plate.
 2. They resent the time the offering takes from their time on the platform. Your worship pastor already resents the 30 to 40 minutes the sermon takes. "Just as we get going in worship we have to stop and take up the offering." That was a true statement a staff member once made to me. I wonder if she felt that way about the announcements. We give more time and thought to our announcements than we do our offering. You must lead your staff to see the offering as a key part of worship, not an interruption to worship.
 3. Most ministerial staff have not been taught the value of the offering and the importance of teaching generosity in a positive way.
 4. Too few on your staff have a grasp of the finances of the church in which they serve as leaders!
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Last year I wrote about 4 quick reasons you need to put generosity planning on everyone's weekly to-do list. Here is what I wrote,

1. Jesus made it a huge priority of His teachings. He taught more on money and possessions than any other topic; shouldn't we follow our leader's lead?
2. People struggle with financial issues, so helping them in this struggle helps them be better disciples.
3. Being fully funded means that every ministry in the church can do everything planned.
4. Being fully funded means everyone on staff gets paid.

Those are practical reasons why you and your staff should make offering planning a priority. Let me give you my reason for why I put so much effort into offerings. I do so because,

I believe in the local church! The local church is the on the ground expression of the Kingdom of God. We have a mission from God. He can work any way He chooses. Yet, He chooses to work in and through the local church. He has given us the greatest story ever told. The story of how He loved us so much that He gave His Son, Jesus, for us. We are on a mission to tell that story of the impacting love of Jesus.

What does that have to do with the offering? Everything! A God-ordained mission like that is worth giving to. So, church leader, get over your offering hesitations and don't just take up the offering. Make the offering time a highlight of your worship.

Why would you want to do this? First, and most importantly, our gifts are *supposed* to be worshipful. Let's make that time of worship, worshipful. Finally, when you make your offering times worshipful, they cease to be dry and boring. Thus, attendees are willingly drawn to worship with generous gifts, all because *you* began to see the offering in a new light.

Then, before you know it, you are making budget! *You* might even get a raise. All because you changed how you approached the offering time.

In the next edition of the Coach, I am going to show you how. I have written more on offering talks than any other person I know of. I work with top 100 churches and churches barely running a 100. The principles I teach them I am going to teach you.

But that is where it starts, with you. *You* have to believe in the mission of your church so much so that you're willing to make "the ask." If you are, let's go!

From this point forward, commit to never take the offering time for granted.

Plan out each and every one. Why?

BECAUSE THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF YOUR CHURCH, AND THE MINISTRY *YOU* PROVIDE, DESERVES TO BE FULLY FUNDED AND IS WORTH MAKING "THE ASK" FOR.



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
mark@acts17generosity.com

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will start again January 13th.

This Week's Offering Talk

Here is this week's offering talk.

Giving and Singing Is Up to You

If you are new here, this is the time in our service where we worship God through our gifts back to Him. You might have attended other churches that downplay the offering time. We don't do that here. We try to do just the opposite. We want to elevate the offering, making it one of the key moments in our time of worship. Why? Because the offering doesn't interrupt worship, it *is* worship!

We invite everyone who comes to our church to worship alongside us. Did you notice that as we started the service today no one told you that singing was optional? Yet, we want everyone to sing as, collectively when all of us sing, it enhances our worship to God. We invite you to sing, but you don't have to sing. Sometimes I feel like singing and other times I simply want to let the words impact me. However, the more I sing the more I feel I have truly worshipped God. So, please join us in singing songs of worship.

We also invite you to worship with us during this offering time. Just like we don't make people sing, we don't *make* people give. We believe giving is up to you. Make no mistake, we clearly teach that followers of Jesus should be generous. The Bible is clear about the commands of giving. Your offering is an act of obedience, but we want your gift to come from your heart, not grudgingly given.

Paul summed it up well to the church at Corinth. He was waiting upon their offering to the poor in Jerusalem. Here is what he told them in 2 Corinthians 9:5, "So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one **grudgingly** given."

So, join us as we continue our time of worship with our gifts to God. We have multiple ways by which you can give. Find what works best for you, but let's worship the Lord with generous gifts today!
