

Quarterly Financial Statements Enhance Giving

Every year churches are required to send out an end-of-year giving statement for IRS purposes. Instead of doing it only once a year, consider doing it quarterly. This may send your financial staff persons into a frenzy, but it's really not bad. And once you put a simple system in place, there are multiple benefits.

Consider that quarterly financial statements do the following:

Generate more money for ministry. Sending quarterly statements brings more money into the church because people are reminded on a regular basis, as opposed to once a year and after the fact, of how much they've given. Waiting until the end of the year gives people little time to catch up. Quarterly statements help people stay on track with their giving.

Help maintain accurate records. With each statement, we say, "This is our record of your giving. If your records are different, please call or e-mail the church office." This is not a letter asking for money. It's a financial statement of giving that helps people.

Connect the dots between money and ministry. It is just not on their radar. When we send out quarterly statements, we include a letter that celebrates the ministries we have been able accomplish so far in the year. We share items such as how many people have accepted Christ, give an update on the kids in the mission home we sponsor in El Salvador, and tell about the big youth event that was successful. We thank them for being part of the ministries at Harvest and show that giving to the church is a good investment. It isn't long. It's just a one-page letter that focuses on the positive. Celebrating these accomplishments and thanking people for being a part of them help people connect the dots that link money and ministry.

Cast vision. In the same one-page letter we take the opportunity to cast a little vision. Celebration is about where you've been. Vision deals with where you're going. A lot of churches have money problems because they have vision problems. If you don't have a God-inspired vision for your church's future, you probably aren't going to attract much money. Remember, people don't give to need. People give to vision.

Quarterly statements have had a very positive influence on giving in our church. We think it will work for your church too. Just make sure the letter doesn't come across as fussy, desperate, or begging for money. That approach repels people. Giving people an update on their personal giving celebrates ministry and paints the picture of where God is leading.



Jim Cowart and Jennifer Cowart

Adapted from a story by Jim Cowart and Jennifer Cowart

Please encourage your leaders and congregations to support the World Service Fund apportionment at 100%.