

Implementing a Year-Round Strategic Stewardship Plan

Key points from Mike Slaughter's presentation at the Summer Stewardship Summit on a Year-round stewardship plan¹.

1. Stewardship Begins with Me

The pastor is encouraged to examine her/his role in giving generously, living debt-free, establishing a family budget and sticking to it.

2. Stewardship Is Modeled Through Church Leadership

The church leadership team must be filled with God's Spirit and be faithful in stewardship. The pastor needs to know what persons give. The standard of tithing is an expectation for church leaders. Financial giving is understood as a spiritual discipline.

3. Stewardship Is an Expectation of Membership

A 13-week discipleship class is offered for those contemplating membership. The cost of discipleship is discussed and expectations are outlined: worship participation, small group connection, one or more places of service, a commitment to the tithe. Following the class a one-on-one interview assists potential members to decide if they are ready to join the covenant community. Persons are welcome to continue to participate in the church's programs to the extent they wish without formally becoming a member.

4. The Annual Stewardship Message Series

A month-long sermon series and worship emphasis on stewardship connecting to the church's mission. Testimony is a key element. A targeted direct-mail promotion of the series invites community members to come. The series culminates in Commitment Sunday.

5. Get Out of Debt for Good Class

Three-week class on family finances giving specific information on debt, budgeting and how to pay-off and stay-out of debt.

6. Biannual Meetings with Kingdom Investors

Twice a year the pastor hosts gatherings for those who have made a commitment to financial giving. Two sets of meetings are organized by segmenting givers into two groups: those giving at least \$1,000 per year and those giving more than \$10,000 per year. These events are a time for fellowship and celebration of the church's ministry accomplishments. The pastor also uses this time to share his/her dreams and vision for the church's mission into the future.

7. The Monthly Stewardship Letter

A monthly letter sent to "Kingdom Investors" (those who give at least \$1,000 a year). The letter expressed appreciation for the gifts and connects these gifts with specific results of the church's ministries.

8. Worship DVD Mission Moments

Regular three-minute video clips are used in worship to highlight mission and ministry taking place through the church family.

ⁱ For a fuller description of the plan, refer to *Money Matters: Financial Freedom for all God's Churches*, Chapter Three, Michael Slaughter with Kim Miller, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2006.