

4 Ways to Use Your Giving Time to Extend an Invitation

I visited a church recently.

In between the worship and the Word, they did something called corporate prayer. During this time, members of the church, from their seats, would pray aloud the things that were on their heart for the city, specifically the homeless ministry. One by one they lifted their voices as we bore witness. It was incredibly moving.

As a first time attendee at the church, no one asked me to give. They of course placed no such expectations on me. But in the moment, as I listened to those prayers, my heart was stirred. I wanted to support the work they were doing in the city.

In fact, it would have been great if my gift also opted me into the church's email system so that I could stay updated on the homeless ministry. While it wasn't my home church, I could see myself giving additional volunteer time or funds as the need arose in the future.

Events such as Easter, Christmas, and other special events bring in new visitors, and I'm sure asking these first time attendees to give is the last thing on your mind.

But what if, like me, their heart is stirred. **Do you have a giving solution in place that's simple, mobile friendly, and offers an immediate email reply to say thank you and we'd love to spend more time with you?**

Here are four best practices of churches that know how to **use their giving time to extend an invitation**:

1. Cast the Vision

Just like in my experience, the thing that most moved me was hearing the passion behind the vision of the church. I listened to first hand stories and prayers from church members. This wasn't an idea or wishful thinking, it was church on the move and my financial contributions would have an immediate impact.

2. Utilize Technology

As with many people these days, I just don't carry cash or own checkbooks. We're also subject to the terrible statistic that says we each have about an 8-second attention span. Distractions are plenty. In fact, one study showed that if an online transaction took more than 3 minutes, 85% of people gave up.

This is where a mobile friendly giving solution can help make the barrier to a first time gift extremely low, especially if the gift doesn't require the giver to create a login.

As well, make sure your donor database is connected with an email tool like Mailchimp, so that

givers can stay up to date on the progress you're making with your church's vision and the impact their gift is having.

3. Have an On-Going Communication Strategy

I read recently that 74% of online adults use social media. This isn't just for young people anymore. Conversations are happening online, as well as in person, over coffee, in small groups, etc. A comprehensive communication strategy addresses each of these formats and makes sure that your church is as much a part of the conversation as possible.

Do you have someone monitoring your social media accounts? Do you have a regular email newsletter going out? Do you have small group resources and a special email list just for small group leaders? What training are you giving your welcoming team about introducing visitors to the vision of your church? All of these elements should be covered in your communication strategy.

4. Giving without Borders

Statistics tell us that people are coming to church only 1.7x a month now, so how do we connect with people outside of the church building? With the rise in online services, digital content, and small groups throughout the week, attending church on Sunday isn't the same as it used to be. There's many more ways to connect with the church body and receive teaching other than coming to the building. This isn't right or wrong, it's just the new reality that we face.

There are a couple of considerations here. First, when your church members are on the go, do they have a mobile friendly way to respond generously when they feel led, rather than having to wait until next Sunday? Second, do you have a discipleship plan in place that reaches people where they are? This could include volunteering opportunities, mentoring, digital curriculum, and online recordings of services.

> [Read more from Derek.](#)