

How to Fund Your Ministry Vision

What's the ONE subject almost no church leader enjoys talking about?

Yep. **Money**.

Talking about money feels icky. Asking for money makes us feel like we're begging. So we tiptoe. We skirt around the issue, assuming that taking a softer and more silent approach will earn us good will with people.

And to be sure, being soft or silent about giving and money *will* win us points with some people – especially people who *don't* want to be challenged to grow in generosity and discipleship.

And that's the problem.

Part of the mission of making disciples is teaching people to be more like Jesus. And Jesus was and is a Giver. In fact, God is THE Giver of all givers. Remember John 3:16?

If you're a Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, or any kind of stewardship specialist or administrative leader within your church, you need to get more comfortable talking about money with the congregation.

Here's why...

- It's a **discipleship** issue. People grow spiritually as they learn to loosen their grip on earthly possessions and sacrificially invest in something bigger and more eternal than what they see in the here and now.
- It's a **stewardship** issue. Challenging people to give helps people to *direct* their funds into something that has a long term (eternal) payoff instead of more stuff that fades away.
- It's a **vision** issue. If you *believe* in what God has called your church to do, then you must believe that God's *means* of supporting and supplying it is through the generosity of his people.
- It's an **empowerment** issue. Tons of people are not giving up to their potential because they simply haven't been invited to do so with any kind of compelling invitation at all.

Our church is [in the middle of a move](#). As I write this, we're in the home stretch of a construction project. We purchased a building and we're remodeling it into a meeting space so we can move out of our leased facility.

When we announced the decision to move, we knew we needed funds to do so. Even though the monthly cost to service our new debt was about the same as our rent payment, we needed quite a bit of capital to make the purchase and then do the building and finishing out of the space.

So we asked God to provide at least \$250,000 in addition to our regular giving, which amounted to about 40% of our annual budget.

I'd never made an ask that large of our congregation – or any other I'd led for that matter. Obviously, plenty of leaders have successfully raised far more, but for our seven-year-old church, it was a rather significant goal.

And to brag on my church for a second, **THEY DID IT!** (And I'm extremely proud of them, to say the least!)

With one day left in the 2018 calendar year, we surpassed our goal! And people are still giving toward the move.

In the first five years of our church's life, we transitioned from 100% of our budget being met by outside supporters to 100% being met by the tithes and offerings of our members. We've been able to send missionaries, support other church plants, train and support church planting teams, serve our community, and carry on all of the ministry that happens within our church family on a weekly basis as well.

Over those seven years, I've learned a few big lessons – some of them the hard way – about how to raise funds to support ministry and missions.

Here are a few of my top tips...

Handle Money with Integrity

Our financial record-keeping is outsourced to [Belay Solutions](#). We receive offerings and make the deposits, then Belay steps in and manages our funds and our budgets, reconciles our statements, and handles our payroll, taxes, and reporting.

We work hard to comply with all laws and maintain high ethical standards so that people can give with greater confidence.

Help People Get Unstrapped

People feel way better about giving when they aren't financially strapped. And part of our role in presenting the wisdom and power of scripture is addressing the most personal and vital of personal areas of life, including personal finances.

In the middle of our big season of fundraising, I taught a series of messages called [UnStrapped](#), designed to help people apply biblical wisdom to getting out of debt, saving more, and becoming more generous. It's hard to ask people to give before we've offered this kind of spiritual help.

Lead by Example

One of the coolest moments, for me, was being able to announce that our staff (whose livelihoods are connected to the giving of our congregation) were giving 15% of our big goal themselves.

Tithing and generosity are part of our culture, and they're part of a commitment staff members make at the outset of becoming part of the Grace Hills team. It's part of our [staff covenant](#) because we believe in leading by example.

Share a Big Vision

The Bible is clear about at least one thing – our dreams are almost always too small. Ephesians 3:20-21 says, *“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever!”* (NLT)

Whatever you think God can do, it's always, always more. Every time I see God come through, I realize just how small my vision actually is.

Value Everyone's Contribution

Some people gave tens of thousands of dollars toward our big goal, but the offerings that broke my heart were usually about \$5, given by single moms and widows and people with fixed incomes or no incomes at all, but who wanted to be a part of what God was doing.

I know there are various opinions among pastors about how to challenge “large donors,” but I continue to have the conviction that we must truly, deep in our hearts, value every single contribution. Yes, some people need to be challenged to give large amounts because God has entrusted them with much, but never fail to appreciate the magnitude of someone with almost nothing, sharing it because they love Jesus and his church.

Celebrate Generosity Openly

Over time, we become what we celebrate. The primary task of a leader, long term, is creating a healthy culture. And part of having a healthy church culture is celebrating the giving of God's people.

Raise Faith, Not Just Funds

There's a big difference between asking people to give money to meet the church's financial needs and asking people to stretch their faith and give because *they* need to grow spiritually. We don't just raise funds *for* the church. We raise funds *for* those who will give, and who will grow as a result of their giving.

It's always about stewardship and discipleship. I'm moved that our church gave and met the need. I'm even more moved that so many people were thrilled to be part of what God was

doing.

I believe that our church is just now beginning to witness such miracles, and many more are to come in our future. Ultimately, what delights me most is that we're on the same page when it comes to the mission of reaching more people who need the light and hope of the good news of Jesus Christ!

Read more from Brandon.

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