

Why is Fund Raising Not Fun?

Most pastors do not realize that the professional fund raising industry for churches began to strongly establish itself in the 1970's with the founding of a few key firms. Today, the foundation of the largest and most successful firms, along with several smaller and individually operated groups, still derive strategies from these initial firms. Even still the most popular approaches today in modern church fund raising can trace their practices back to the strategies developed in the early 1900's by famed YMCA fund raiser, Charles Sumner Ward. It was Ward who developed initiatives like, a short run campaign, celebrity endorsements, use of professional marketing, and the "campaign clock" or aka, thermometer.

Many of the largest church capital fund raising firms have had a challenging journey the last decade as a result of the 2008 recession. Today, the business is thriving again for most firms, but the call of the pastor is different. There is less interest today in short-run, expensive campaigns that yield a high immediate return at the cost of a healthy culture. Over the past year our firm has watched a number of churches call with a fund raising need, but with a greater desire for a more substantial experience. Pastors tend to resist fund raising seasons though they know they are nearly unavoidable. This gap of needing funds and the resistance to raise funds must be bridged. God has blessed pastors with vision, gifted His people with resources, and is calling His church toward an impactful future.

Here are some responses intended to answer the question, "Why is fund raising not fun?"

1. Because fund raising is money focused. (*Disciple chasing is obedience focused.*)

There simply is no way to get around it. Pure fund raising is often need based and driven to achieve a financial transaction. The very clear stated objective at the outset of any major campaign is the need for money, usually large sums of money that a church does not have readily available. The stress and pressure is definitely felt. However, as the church we have the confidence that God-initiated dreams are His responsibility to fund. Man should not feel the pressure to produce. God has all the resources needed and more. As a matter of fact, He already has a plan in place to fund His vision. What He desires is to lead His people on a journey so they are ready for what He plans to do through them in the future.

2. Because fund raising can be a lucrative business. (*Disciple chasing is wise stewardship.*)

For several years I served on church staff and experienced multiple campaigns. With

each campaign we hired a different fund raising firm and cringed at the cost and approach. Eventually I would leave staff and start my own generosity firm. I am so glad today to be a salaried employee in a non-profit that seeks to provide professional generosity coaching at a price that is good stewardship for the local church. The truth is that local church staff and leadership will do the vast majority of the work. A professional is hired for experience and expertise. It is so empowering to reframe fund raising in a discipleship context for staff teams. It creates such collaboration, builds confidence, and releases resources.

3. Because fund raising is outside in. (*Disciple chasing is inside out.*)

Fund raising sees the project first, then the funding gap. Discipleship sees the vision. This vision is fueled by faith in a God who promises to accomplish it through His people. I always want to be a part of projects that inspire biblical faith, require bold prayers, and put us totally dependent upon God. These elements grow a disciple. Generosity is far more a heart issue than a wallet issue. Once a heart is in love, generosity can't be stopped.

4. Because fund raising is a short run fix. (*Disciple chasing is a long-term surplus.*)

Whenever we are interviewed by churches, leaders want to talk about campaign follow up. They readily admit that it is important to success as well as a point of previous failure. However, I am still amazed when the future campaign is complete how few churches maintain the stewardship trajectory began during a healthy process. Money is something every human handles every day. God is a generous God and He created us to be generous. Generosity feels great to both the giver and receiver. It is such an easy and common conversation that should never grow old. Overflowing, joy filled generosity can happen every week, not just when there is a critical need.

5. Because fund raising is not pastoral. (*Disciple chasing is very pastoral.*)

I do not believe God called pastors to be fund raisers. I do believe He called them to be visionary disciple makers. Generosity is in the heart of every human. On the other side of generosity is freedom, reward, and fruit. Every pastor desires these things for the people he leads. Your people need your help. They need to know and experience what the Bible teaches. However, most pastors lack the confidence to tackle this timely issue.

> [Read more from Todd.](#)

Would you like to learn more about fund raising for your church? [Connect with an Auxano Navigator and start a conversation with our team.](#)