

Discussion Guide

Chapter 1: Discipleship, Not Membership

1. Think about the language used in your congregation.
 - Discuss times when your congregation has used “membership” language.
 - Discuss times when your congregation has used “discipleship” language.
 - Develop an “action plan” to use “discipleship” language more often.
2. How does your congregation talk about or demonstrate the need of the giver to give, rather than the need of the congregation to receive?
3. Develop an “action plan” to focus your stewardship ministry on the need of the giver to give, rather than the need of the congregation to receive.

Chapter 2: It All Belongs to God

1. Our society tells us that what we have belongs to us, to use as we wish. The Bible tells us that everything belongs to God, and we are the stewards, or managers, of that which God has entrusted to us. How does this distinction change your understanding of giving?
2. How might it change your congregation's understanding of giving?

Chapter 3: Money and Possessions in the New Testament

1. How have money and possessions posed a threat to your relationship with Jesus? Be specific.
2. Do you understand it to be your duty to provide for those who have less money and possessions than you do? If so, what are some specific ways this duty plays out in your life? If not, with what word would you like to replace the word “duty”?

Chapter 4: Portrait of a Biblical Giver

1. Write the six biblical stewardship values across the top of a page.
 - Make a list of specific ways your congregation has encouraged each value in the past year.
 - Make a list of ways your congregation will encourage each value in the coming year.
2. In your own life, how has money led your heart to Jesus?

Chapter 5: Practicing Biblical Stewardship

1. How is money talked about in your congregation?
2. In your congregation:
 - How has the pastor been encouraged to stay out of stewardship ministry?
 - How has the pastor been encouraged to provide leadership in stewardship ministry?
 - Has the pastor wanted to take a leadership role in stewardship ministry?

Chapter 6: Ask: The Annual Response Program

1. Review the annual response programs you have used over the past five years. Make a chart with five columns that lists:
 - The method you have used to ask (see pages 76–80)
 - When you started the planning process each year
 - How follow-up was conducted
 - How you did at paying attention to the basics (pages 68–72)
2. As you review this chart:
 - Do you see any patterns?
 - What have you done well?
 - What could you have done better?
 - (Save this chart for use with Chapter 8.)

Chapter 7: Ask: Making the Pie Larger

1. Make another chart for the past five years. For each year, list all the ways congregation members have been invited to give in addition to their regular support of the congregation's ministry.
 - Were new opportunities provided through the years, or are you “in a rut”?
2. Brainstorm new possibilities for asking members to give to ministries beyond the congregation.
3. Do you really believe that “Giving begets giving” (p. 93), or are you worried that asking members to give beyond the congregation will negatively impact giving to the congregation?

Chapter 8: Improving How You Ask

1. Look again at the chart you created for Chapter 6. Evaluate your last five annual response programs based on the “Effective Ways to Ask” (pages 95–96) and the “Motivations for Giving” (pages 97–98).
2. Have you used varied methods?
3. Have you used more effective ways to ask and tapped into the stronger motivations for giving?

Chapter 9: Thank

1. How do you currently thank members of the congregation for their giving and for their involvement in the life of the congregation?
2. Review “Creating a Culture of Thanksgiving” (pages 104–108) and “Some Great Opportunities to Say Thanks” (pages 108–110). On the basis of these sections, decide on three things you will do to improve how you thank.

Chapter 10: Tell

1. Evaluate how you currently tell your congregation's mission story based on this chapter. What media are you currently using?
 - Choose one medium you aren't currently using and make plans to start telling your mission story in a new way.
2. Talk with members of the church staff about information from other ministries that is received by the congregation. Make a plan that includes the stewardship team in those who see this material.

Chapter 11: Organizing for Your Stewardship Ministry

1. Identify people with the appropriate gifts to serve on each of the three work groups. Ask them to serve, stressing that their gifts are needed.
2. Get the right people on each work group, give each person a copy of “Ask, Thank, Tell,” quit having monthly stewardship committee meetings, pray for the power of God's Spirit, and watch stewards grow like the grass after a summer rain.