

Stewardship Slump During The Summer

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It has been hot in the lowcountry, and we know summer is here. Did you prepare for the impact the summer season will have on your church's giving? If not, hopefully this article will help. I am going to give you 3 ideas that either clergy or lay people can implement immediately.

It doesn't take a church consultant to tell you that most churches experience a decrease in regular giving during the summer months. It is not that people do not care about their church; people simply choose not to attend church as often for various reasons. Well-meaning church members turn their attention toward beaches, mountaintop cabins, trips to the lake, and anything else that might pop up during the summer months. I am not saying anyone is a bad person or not a faithful church member for taking a vacation. However, an inconsistent attendance pattern can create a cash flow crisis if we're not prepared.

Simply put: Ministry happens whether every member is present or not. That means the church is still spending money to do ministry, even if people aren't attending as they normally do. Every year clergy, vestry and Stewardship Committees promise they'll "do better" next year. But uncle "do better" comes and goes.

The secret to accomplishing "do better" on your summer giving is all about staying connected and building community even when your faithful attenders aren't as regular as they normally are in their attendance of the normal weekend experience.

Try these 3 things to achieve your "do better" plan.

1. Update E-mail Addresses And Roster. People change e-mail addresses, cell phone numbers or home addresses all the time. Unfortunately, they will not always tell the church in a timely manner, unless they are asked. Have your secretary, communication person or volunteer to update your roster this summer. The best way to do this is by making a phone call. This makes a connection, adds a personal touch and updates your information. This can also lead to important pastoral conversations or issues the church needs to know.

2. Create and Post Videos. People enjoy seeing videos about church activities, people or events. This can be especially enjoyable to people who are elderly or home bound, but they have computer access. One of the easiest ways to create a video is by using a website named **Animoto.** Animoto allows you to upload still images or pictures and turn them into videos. You can add music to your videos as well. Make your videos short, relative to church life and fun. The best two formats to share your videos are YouTube and Vimeo. The videos can be sent through your preferred email system.

3. Print Summer Pledge Statements. Some churches have the capability to keep thorough pledge records, and some do not. A good church membership and financial program is Membership Plus. This program is especially good for small to medium-size parishes. Depending on your church's needs, you can purchase this program for less than \$400.00. Printing pledge statements reminds people where they are on their financial commitment to the church. It also catches any potential record keeping errors early.

Make this year the one when you choose to take action and do something different when it comes to addressing the summer giving slump.