There are several things that your congregation can do to improve its’ ministry of stewardship. The following list is just a small sampling:

**Define the terms.** Most people do not have a clear understanding of what stewardship is, because nobody has ever told them. Define what “stewardship” is (and is not). For example, stewardship is “caring for God’s creation”; it is NOT just “fund-raising”.

**Lead by example.** If you feel strongly about a particular ministry, give generously to support it rather than waiting for someone else to take the lead.

**Experience the joy of giving.** Give out of a sense of joy, not out of a sense of duty or obligation. Give because you want to, not because you have to.

**Explain the difference between “regular giving” and “second-mile giving”.** Regular giving (also known as “first fruits giving”) are offerings that are given on a regular basis. “Second-mile giving” is designated giving, contributions made to ministry projects above and beyond the regular weekly offerings. For example, gifts to world hunger or disaster relief are examples of “second-mile giving”.

**Teach people good personal financial management skills.** Personal money management courses, pre-retirement seminars, and planned giving forums help people to become better stewards of their financial resources.

**Offer a variety of methods for people to give.** Younger people today do not carry cash or write checks; they are used to giving electronically. What can your church do to make it easier for individuals to give?

**Establish guidelines and policies for memorial gifts, bequests, and endowment funds.** Share that information with the congregation and let them know how they can participate in those giving opportunities.

**Tell stories of how giving makes an impact on people’s lives.** Hearing stories about how people give generously and the impact that has on others inspires others to give generously.

**Develop a three-year plan to grow your congregation’s ministry of stewardship.** As you look to the future, what new ministries would your congregation like to support? Invite people to grow in their giving.

**Invite people to give from their accumulated resources.** Offer seminars and workshops on estate planning. Have trusted professionals explain the tax ramifications of an estate plan.

**Be clear and positive in all of your communication.** People like to be informed, so let them know what is happening and be sure to thank them in the process.

**Encourage generosity.** Provide people with the opportunity to give and allow them the privilege of contributing to specific ministries. Link people’s passions to the kinds of ministries they are likely to support.

**Help raise congregational “giving expectations”.** Invite people to tithe (or to consider “proportionate-giving”); ask them to participate more fully in congregational ministries (in terms of their time, talents and treasury).

**Explore how God blessed your congregation to be a blessing to others.** Help people understand how God has blessed them in many ways (not just financially), and teach them how to use those blessings to bless others.

**Consider the possibilities.** If money was no object, what kinds of ministries would congregational members joyfully and willingly support?