Improving Your Congregation's Ministry of Stewardship

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".

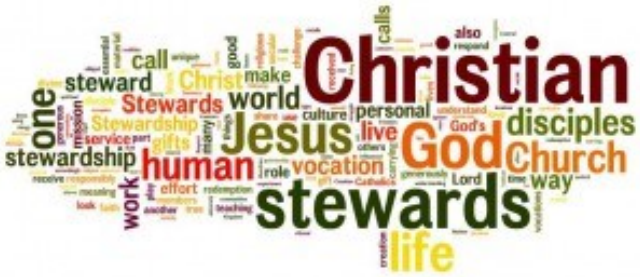
Lead by example. If you feel strongly about a particular ministry, give generously to support it rather than waiting for someone else to take the lead.

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?