



## How Can I Increase the Impact of My Giving?

Many of you may wish to support the church or charity close to your heart. However, you may feel the amount you are able to give is small compared to the overall budgetary needs of that organization. For example, if you want to make a one-time gift of \$500 and the expense budget of the charity is one million dollars, then that gift represents only one-hundredths of a percent of the budget. Understandably, if the charity has a lot of people giving money, they are able to meet their budgetary needs. The impact of your gift still is the same. You

certainly could give more, but there is a ceiling on how much you can do and the impact on the organization.

So, how do you increase the impact of your gift, and how does your church or charity recognize and appreciate the impact of that different way of giving?

Let's go through a series of ideas on how you can give, and see how the impact rises as we progress through these methods.

The first idea is simple. If you can commit to giving \$500 every year and let the charity know your intentions, then they can count on that gift every year as long as you are able to give that amount. That is far better than one year gifts as the charity can do their budget planning with more certainty. Imagine a church or charity having more of their donors committing that way, although in many churches that is being done each year in stewardship campaigns as part of a pledging process.

Let's go up one notch in impact by timing that gift. Suppose you call your church or charity and ask what month of the year is the slowest month for donations. One example for a church is that their giving goes down in the summer months as attendance at church services goes down, due to more families going on vacations. What if you donate your annual commitment during that slowest month? That would help even out the cash flow needs in their budget and perhaps some cost on expenses or debt to cash flow those lean months. There is not one church or charity, in my experience, that has not had a higher appreciation of that form of thoughtful and tactical giving.

Let's talk about what may be the next method of giving that, if done correctly, would not adversely affect your other financial goals but dramatically impact your current level of giving. Suppose you could take a portion of your assets and create a bucket of money (a donor advised fund as one example) that may be used to either take over your annual commitment over a number of years, or for perpetuity. Imagine the reaction of your church or charity if they knew that they would be receiving your annual commitment for over ten years. What if there were sufficient funds in that bucket to cause the interest or growth each year to be sufficient to meet your annual commitment? Your church or charity would have a continuous income stream that would extend beyond your lifetime and for generations to follow! That is invaluable to that organization.



Finally, if you evolve your personal giving to these higher levels, imagine the impact to a church or charity if you can influence your family, friends, or associates to go through the same evolution you experienced. This would have a “multiplier effect” on the impact of your own giving plan.

This brings to mind a conversation that one of our advisors had with his church pastor years ago. He simply asked him, “how does a church survive financially from generation to generation?” The pastor’s response surprised us. He explained that churches had done studies concluding that for every eight new members that join a church over time, seven members move away or leave the church. The remaining

member joins a mature group of givers that represents a significant part of the budget. As long as a church can add eight new members for each generation to evolve to that one mature giver, then a church can remain vibrant. He then sighed and said that this has become a significant challenge for many churches. Our advisor asked him, “what if half or more of the mature giving members of the church would perpetuate their annual giving? What impact would that have on the ability of the church to be financially viable over time?” He told him it would give the church a way to not only stabilize part of the budget but allow for growth of its ministry. Since that conversation, the church has begun to do this very thing through the use of an endowment, and having members create donor-advised funds to perpetuate their giving.

We would encourage you to investigate the possibilities mentioned above to leverage your giving and have a greater impact on helping your favorite church or charities.

For more information about our Charitable Giving Fund Program contact:

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