

Southern California Founders Fund
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Developing A Stewardship Program for the Local Church

Just as each person has a will, each church has a Stewardship Program. In the case of a will, if you do not make your own, the State you reside in will write one for you. In the case of a Stewardship Program for the local church, if there is no written policy, each person will make his own decision, often forgetting the local church. A good Stewardship Program for a local church should have at least three key elements:

The first is to teach what the Scriptures say about personal stewardship. We must focus on a person's time, talents and treasure. Christ taught that all we have has been given to us by God. We are to be good managers of our blessings. He requires a reporting of how well we have done. This message should be taught frequently. While a series of messages on Stewardship is good, there also needs to be weekly teaching. It may be something spoken from the pulpit, a message in the bulletin or weekly newsletter, or a special class during Sunday school or mid-week service. We must not only just talk about a person's treasure, but also the importance of dedicating our time and talents to God.

The second aspect of a good Stewardship Program is sharing needs. Share special needs with those in your own congregation frequently. We need people to help this week with our VBS or special mailing or cleaning the bus. A new church is starting in our District, would you be willing to support it with a financial gift for the next six months? Share special needs of our missionaries or our children that need help to go to camp. Often times someone in our Church has been blessed with extra time or finances and would like to bless a special ministry.

Third, effective Stewardship Programs present opportunities to meet needs. Telling people about needs but not giving them an opportunity to meet those needs is like preaching a great sermon with no opportunity for people to respond. They tell us that 14% of a person's wealth is in cash and the other 86% is in real estate, stocks, bonds or other non-liquid accounts. We often give people in our congregation an opportunity to give from their 14% assets, but rarely from their 86% assets. A Will, Living Trust, Gift Annuity, or Charitable Remainder Trust are often overlooked. The local church would do well to develop a relationship with a local Christian attorney to provide information on how more complex giving plans could be implemented.