



A STEWARDSHIP TOOLKIT for the Rural Church



Tool 4 : Four Key Tasks to Encourage Giving

Donations and giving from church members is by far the largest source of income for parishes across the country, on average accounting for over two thirds of income. Planned regular giving, together with gift aid recovered, provides for most PCCs a bedrock of financial support, yet some churches still rely on variable plate collections.

Research has shown that just doing four simple things will encourage planned giving. These need not take long, and in the smaller church, may be as little as an hour a year. Yet investing this time will have a significant benefit.

1. **Say “Thank You!” once a year.**

Writing to say 'thank you' to committed and regular donors is one of the most vital things a church can do, yet for a variety of reasons, this is a task which often gets overlooked. As well as thanking people, this letter can explain how the money is being used, and also provide a reminder that higher rate tax payers using Gift Aid gain additional relief on their donations through the tax return. Some guidance and sample letters are available on the web at : www.parishresources.org.uk/giving.htm

2. **Doing something to promote stewardship generally at least once a year.** This may be as simple as encouraging clergy and readers to preach and teach on stewardship issues, and pointing them towards support material provided for this at www.parishresources.org.uk/preachteach.htm . Biblical teaching is a vital complement to a more practical statement of financial needs.

In addition, you might circulate appropriate material within the parish. This might include diocesan financial summaries, giving materials, legacy leaflets (see www.churchlegacy.org.uk) or placing an article in the parish magazine. (sample articles are downloadable from www.parishresources.org.uk/giving.htm)

3. **Help the parish see the link between giving and mission :** It is important to communicate the church's financial needs through a budget which encourages people to see the mission and ministry impact of their giving. Making the link between parish share and the provision of parish ministry, and underlining the breadth of the church's contacts (see Tool 2 on Footfall), are areas to consider, as is the church's external mission and charitable giving.

4. **Doing some form of annual renewal :** Once a year, it is good to ask those who give to review their giving. There are a variety of approaches to doing this, and a guide is available on the web at www.parishresources.org.uk/giving.htm

The fifth tool in this series provides a light touch approach to running a stewardship campaign, specifically designed for the smaller, rural parish.