



GROW

Your Church Finances

HOW TO RAISE FINANCES FOR
YOUR CHURCH PLANT

By Raul Rivera



THE REALITY FOR TODAY'S CHURCH PLANTER

No church plant is the same. Whether it be the size, people, location, style of music, style of preaching, or whatever else you want to include, there is always something that sets one church apart from another. However, one commonality that all new church plants across the country share is **finances**. While it is true that money is not everything, it is money that helps to determine whether or not a new church plant lasts. That may sound a bit extreme, but when you think about the society in which we live and the culture with which the church has to compete, perhaps that statement is more true than we would like to admit. In essence, all churches need money in order to operate and have a lasting impact in the 21st century.

Thus, the reality for all church planters today is that they need money. Money is needed for marketing and advertising, purchasing

furniture and sound equipment, renting a facility for worship services, legal start-up fees, food and beverages for various gatherings or celebrations, supplies for the children's ministry, nursery, and so much more. Yet, there remains a struggle: pastors do not like asking for money. Many pastors feel as if there is something wrong with asking people to support them and this "crazy" dream and vision that God has given them about the church they are to plant. But what you need to realize is that when God called you to plant a church, He simultaneously began speaking to others about funding.

That being said, the question that most, if not all, church planters find themselves asking is, *"How do I begin to raise enough money to start a church in this day and age?"* This eBook on raising finances for your church plant is written for that very purpose. We have written this eBook in hopes that it will be a source of encouragement for you while you are on this journey, to provide you with a strategic plan that you can easily implement in order to begin raising the finances you need for your church plant.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

Before we dive into the five steps that will help you begin raising finances for your church plant, please note that this eBook is not meant to be an exhaustive, or comprehensive, guide to church plant fundraising. Rather, this eBook is intended to be a resource that you can continually come back to when you begin to feel the “well of ideas” running dry. We want this to be a tool that sparks the flow of creativity within you. We realize that although there may be a lot of similarities between church plants, each plant is very different from the other. Because of that, not every thing is going to work for every church. Some things that work for one church plant will not, for whatever reason, work for yours. And that is okay. It is one of the aspects that makes The Church unique.

You will find that this eBook is broken down into **5 simple steps** that will help you to begin raising finances in order to meet your financial goal. Those 5 steps are as follows:

Step 1: Be Realistic

It is important for you to realize that you cannot do this on your own. The financial aspect of planting a church is a reality, and you will need to ask for help.

Step 2: Expand your Knowledge

Do not be afraid to think outside of the box and be creative when it comes to raising finances. At the rate in which our society evolves and changes, what worked 5 years ago may not work now, and what worked at your father’s and grandfather’s church will definitely not work in today’s world.

Step 3: Be Aware

It is imperative that you are aware of your “surroundings”. Where are you planting? What types of equipment and supplies will you need? You should at least have an idea of the costs.

Step 4: Have a Plan

If any sports team were to play in its championship game without a game plan, would that team win? Absolutely not! In the same way, you must be ready to implement a systematic plan. Implementing a systematic plan also includes having a budget prepared for your launch phase as well as your 1st year of operation.

Step 5: Tap Into the Wealth

This last step actually has nothing to do with money. Numerous people before you have planted churches, and all of them have needed to raise money in order to accomplish the work. It would only be beneficial to use the wisdom and experience that they can bring to the table. Therefore, you need to tap into their wealth of knowledge.

STEP 1:

BE REALISTIC

When God places a call upon one's life and he decides to answer that call, it is one of the most exhilarating moments of all. Yet, often that individual begins to feel weighed down, burdened, and alone in the call to which he answered "yes".

This is simply because the individual feels as though all of the responsibility falls upon him. Desiring not to "bother" others whom he perceives to already have a full plate of their own to worry about, many ministers quickly get burned out. The reality is that the call God has placed upon your life is not one that He intended for you to carry out on your own. You are going to need help, and it is okay to ask for that help. In fact, it is imperative that you ask for help. Consider the following example.

EXAMPLE STORY

Craig is a man who passionately loves God. Many people who know Craig would even say that he is a man after God's own heart, much like King David. Although Craig has never served in the ministry fulltime, he has served in various leadership roles within his home church throughout the past 12 years.

For the past year or so, however, Craig has been feeling that God is calling him to plant a church. After much fasting and prayer, Craig has decided to answer the church-planting call he has sensed God placing upon his heart. The one dilemma is that Craig does not really know where to start. With his own income he has begun funding the church plant and even pulling money out of his and his wife's retirement fund, which they had worked very hard to build. But the financial requirement that it takes to plant a church has put a strain on Craig's personal finances, causing Craig to begin questioning whether or not he is called to plant a church after all.

All too often, church planters find themselves in a similar situation to the example above. The financial requirement and commitment it takes to plant a church becomes too much for them to bear, thus resulting in questioning the calling that God has placed upon their lives. The first of our five steps is that you have to be realistic. You cannot do this on your own, and it was never God's intention for you to do it on your own. Let us look at three points that will help guide you to realistic expectations.



1. Ask for help!

The first point is to ask for help. Oftentimes, the initial mistake church planters make is not asking anyone for assistance. You need help in order to carry out the call that God has placed upon your life. If you were to ask church planters what their least favorite part of church planting is, 99.9% of them would say having to ask for money and/or having to raise finances (these two are really synonymous). Yet those same church planters would let you know that without adequate funding, a church plant in this day and age is at an immediate disadvantage before it even has the opportunity to launch.

Therefore, it is imperative that you ask for help.

Now, it is important to realize that when you ask people to partner with you, they will generally fall into one of three types of partnerships:



Prayer Partners



Financial Partners



Launch Team Members

Some of the individuals you reach out to will be on your prayer team, which is a crucial element for the success of your church plant. Others will partner with you financially to help make the dream a reality. And then some will be called by God to join you in the journey as members of your launch team (for more information on launch teams, please check out our other free eBook

How to Grow Your Launch Team). Some individuals from whom you ask help may participate in all three of the above-mentioned categories. The important point to take away from this is to realize that you need help. Do not hesitate; people are waiting. Next, let us look at the second point that will help guide you to realistic expectations.

2. Realize that it is for people, not from people

As we have previously stated, church planters do not like having to ask for money. As much as they would like to avoid the subject of money, it is simply a reality that they must face. However, if you can allow your perspective on money to change and realize that when you are asking for financial support, it is for people and not from people, then you will receive a paradigm shift that is like receiving a breath of fresh air.

You already know that the church God has called you to plant is not so that you can make your name great or so that you can give yourself a pat on the back. Rather, the church you are planting is for the people in the community in which you are planting, the people whose lives need to be changed. The church you are planting is for the people whose lives need to be changed. The church you are planting is for the people whose souls need to be saved and touched by the grace of God. When you allow that to become your perspective, then when you approach an individual about financial support he will see the vision and dream in your heart to plant a life-changing church that truly impacts people.



This paradigm shift also adds value to your donors by simply giving them an opportunity to invest back into God's Kingdom. When you understand that this is not a one way street where you are the only one to benefit from their financial gift, the necessity to ask for help, to ask for financial support, becomes a lot easier. There is great value and benefit that the donors receive as they give. For as the Scripture reads in Acts 20:35 (NIV), "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, let us discuss the third point helpful in guiding you to realistic expectations.

3. Walk by faith, not by sight

It does not take long for church planters to find themselves in the "thick" of things once they have answered yes to God's call. Once you have answered yes and the thrill and excitement begin to wear off a bit, the task of actually launching the church can seem daunting. However, as believers we must remember that we *are to walk by faith and not by sight*, as the Scripture reads in 2 Corinthians 5:7. Even when we choose to walk by faith, things can get a little scary.

In the book of Matthew, chapter 14, we find Peter climbing out of the boat after Jesus calls for Peter to come to Him out on the water. Without hesitation, Peter answered Jesus' call and began walking towards Him on the water. It was not until Peter was out on the water, in the midst of his calling, that he began to consider his surroundings and the task before him rather than keeping his eyes on Jesus. It was at that point that he began to sink. Peter became so overwhelmed, scared, and intimidated by his surroundings that he lost focus not on what he was called to do, but rather, on who had called him.

In a similar manner, church planters often get overwhelmed by the "to do list" of their calling and they lose focus on who has called them to plant the church in the first place. Just as it is important for you to realize that you need help from other individuals, it is equally or more important to realize that you cannot traverse this journey on your own strength and power. You must keep in mind that your calling to plant a church is a journey of faith.

"Walk in boldness with the confidence that as you begin to step out and ask people to partner with you financially to plant this church, many of those people will say yes, for with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:26 NIV



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STEP 2:

EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Church planting today is not the same as it was 30 years ago, much less 5 years ago. Our culture and society have changed so much that it has altered the way churches are planted today. Without having adequate financial support, many church plants find themselves struggling to survive. Because of this, as a church planter, you need to expand your knowledge on what it takes to successfully raise finances for your church plant. Therefore, throughout step 2 we will explore three ways that you can expand your knowledge when it comes to raising finances for your church plant.

1. Join a church planting organization

There are numerous church planting organizations with which you could choose to partner. It is important, though, that if you decide this is the best route for you to take, you choose a church planting organization through much prayer. Church planting organizations are established to help you launch your church and support your church financially. They desire to see your church succeed just as much as you do. When partnering with a church planting organization, you will generally go through some sort of review process, to ensure that your church is a right fit for their organization and that their organization is a right fit for your church. Throughout that



review process you will be required to expand your knowledge more than you thought possible regarding church planting and methods of raising finances. However, joining a church planting organization is not meant for every church plant. That said, let us also look at three other ways to expand your knowledge, which will be beneficial for all new church plants.

2. Know where you are planting

Whether you are planting your church 20 miles, 200 miles, or 2,000 miles from where you currently live, it is imperative that you have a sound understanding of the community in which you are planting. Since raising finances for your church plant is such an important part in the launch process, it would only serve you and your church well to be familiar with the economic status of the community in which you are planting.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Familiarizing yourself with property values for rental facilities, the average household income, cost of living, and more, allows you to realistically plan financially for your church's launch. Now, this requires a bit of research on your part, but having this knowledge is a tremendous help when it comes to financial preparations for your church plant. Therefore, get ready to expand your knowledge and do a little research!

3. Begin considering what your church will need prior to launching

Most first-time church planters do not realize the present financial cost of planting a church until they are actually in the process of planting. They may have an idea of the financial cost, but it is not a reality until they are actually experiencing the financial pulls. Therefore, it will be advantageous for you to expand your knowledge and begin to examine the financial cost of planting the church. You should contemplate everything from marketing and advertising, mailers, postage, and sound equipment, to furniture, food and beverage, ministry supplies, and much, much more. One resource for you to begin checking out is companies such as Portable Church or "Church in a Box" that provide nearly everything you need for your launch service. It is best to go ahead and receive a quote on the packages that will best fit your needs. The earlier you are able to begin pricing out these types of items, the more it will help you to determine and create a budget, which we will discuss later in this eBook.

STEP 3:

BE AWARE

As a church planter, one of the best things that you can do in preparation for raising finances for your church plant is to be aware. The more you intentionally attempt to be aware, the more smoothly the fundraising process will go for you and your church plant. In this section, we will examine 4 areas that you can work on to become more aware.

1. Financial requirements to get started legally

When potential church planters consider the financial costs required to plant a church, many think of the costs for a facility to meet in, sound equipment, furniture, office supplies, supplies for children's ministry, and marketing and advertising, just to name a few. But seldom do church planters consider the financial cost to get started legally.

Most, for that matter, are not even aware of where to start. Below are a few examples of cost to consider as you expand your knowledge regarding the financial requirements of starting a church with a proper, legal foundation:

- Getting incorporated in your state (most states require a filing fee);
- Annual reports with your state (varies by state);
- IRS 501(c)(3) application filing fee of \$600;
- Sales tax exemption (varies by state);
- Franchise tax exemption (varies by state);
- The cost of having someone assist you with this process (attorneys and CPAs usually charge anywhere between \$5,000 and \$7,000 per organization for their services);
- Our service at StartCHURCH is approximately one third less, and we



guarantee your approval); and In order to open a church bank account, you must obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and the approved articles of incorporation from your state.

Next, let us look at a second area requiring your awareness as you begin to raise finances for your church plant.

2. Be aware of the various avenues available

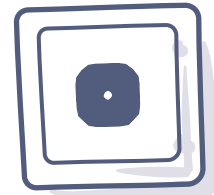
In addition to knowing how to raise finances for your church plant, it is important to be aware of the various avenues available for receiving donations. There is always the age-old way of receiving cash donations, but we live in a day in time in which people very seldom deal with cash. Today, most every transaction is done by swiping a credit/debit card or online. Below are a few examples that will help you to expand your knowledge when it comes to the various avenues available for you to receive finances for your church plant.



Church Website



Fundraising Website



Square Reader



Stripe



Text Message

These few examples are not only beneficial to you and your church, but also to the giver because when you utilize these tools, the donor can give and be done in a matter of seconds. Although you may not be familiar with how some of these options work, with just a little bit of research online, you can expand your knowledge regarding the various avenues available for your church plant to receive donations.

3. Setting and tracking goals

As a general rule of thumb, it is important to set goals in life. When we set goals, it allows us to know towards what we are working. Setting goals, in a sense, gives purpose to the journey. In addition, tracking the progress of how close you are to meeting your goals is just as important as setting them. No matter what you are doing, if you do not have a way to track the progress of your goals, how will you know what does and does not work? How will you be able to appreciate how far you have come, or when you have achieved a goal?

In the same manner that you make personal goals, as a church planter you should also set financial goals for your church plant. By setting these goals, you are allowing yourself to be more aware of where you are at and where you are wanting to go.

SUGGESTION

Our suggestion is that you set both large and small goals. The large goal allows you to know where you want to be at when it is all said and done. By also setting the small goals, you are allowing yourself and your launch team to experience success and victory along the way, which will encourage you until the end.

Now, before we move on to the fourth step to help you raise finances for your church, let us look at the fourth area that you can work towards in heightening your awareness.

4. Meet with people on their turf

The obvious goal is to have people come and join you on this journey of church planting; whether it is as launch team members or simply individuals that attend the church once it is launched. However, when meeting with potential financial partners for your church plant, it is more practical to go to them.

Meet them on their turf, whether that be their home, office, or wherever they choose. The important point is that you want to be aware of what makes them comfortable, and that is usually on their turf.

Raul Rivera

STEP 4:

HAVE A PLAN

The fourth of our five simple steps to help you raise finances for your church is to simply have a plan. Now, yes, that may seem like an obvious step. However, there are 3 things that we believe you should consider as you begin to create and establish your plan to raise finances for your church plant.

1. Implement a systematic plan

God has already given you the dream and vision for your church plant. It is now your responsibility as the leader to clearly articulate your dream and vision into a plan that turns it into a reality—a plan that works and is easily understandable by all who choose to travel with you along this church planting journey. Included in this plan should be systematic steps for how you are going to go about raising finances for the church. We recommend that you consider implementing the following steps into your systematic financial plan:

1. Identify potential financial partners

At this time, no one is a stranger. Anyone with whom you have had any kind of contact or relationship is a potential financial partner.

2. Make personal contact

This goes back to our fourth area of becoming more aware. Make it a part of the plan to meet potential donors on their turf.

3. Share from your heart

When you meet potential financial partners on their turf and share with them your heart and vision for the church, you then need to ask for financial support. We will discuss this more later on.

4. Follow-up with a thank you

Regardless of whether or not an individual is able to become a financial partner or donate to your church plant, you will always, always, always want to make sure that you follow-up with a thank you.

5. Maintain contact with financial partners

This may not seem like it is that important, but these individuals will play an important role during the second round of fundraising. The second round of fundraising is that last push to meet your financial goal prior to the launch of the church.

6. Leave no rock unturned

You will definitely want to utilize social media, email, mailers via the postal service, and any other legal means you can think of that will help you in your systematic financial plan.

In no way is this an exhaustive list, but we believe that if you begin to implement these steps into your plan to raise finances, it will help you to reach your overall financial goal.

2. Create a budget

The second thing that we believe you should consider as you begin to create and establish your plan to raise finances for your church plant is a budget. You need to create a financial budget for at least the launch and first year of the church's existence. Establishing a budget helps you to create both your large and small financial goals.

Although the budget early on in your church planting journey is based upon projections, it is important to have one created. By doing so, it helps you to navigate the “financial waters” of church planting.

Now, you may be saying, “I do not know the first thing about creating a budget for my church plant”. Well, this is where the step of “Expanding your knowledge” comes into play. However, for the sake of this eBook, we have listed several items that you need to consider when creating a budget for your church plant.

Since you are more than likely starting from the ground up, it is best if you begin with general categories:



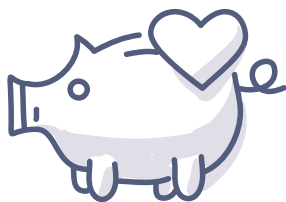
Building



Legal Fees



Salaries



**Charitable Donations/
Benevolence**



Miscellaneous

Once you have your general categories listed, then you can begin to list more specific items that correlate with each category. For example:

- **Building:** This may include line items such as rent and utilities.
- **Legal fees:** This would include any legal fees necessary to get started
- **Salaries:** Although you may not receive a salary during the launch phase, you can project to receive one during the church's first year.
- **Charitable donations/benevolence:** Many churches give 10% of their offerings to other ministries. Many churches also have a benevolence fund for those in need.
- **Miscellaneous:** This category is likely to have the most line items. Here is where you include furniture, sound equipment, office supplies, children's ministry supplies, nursery supplies, and more.

You may already have your own method of creating a budget, and that is great. This is just to give you an example and to demonstrate that it does not have to be as difficult as it may initially seem.



3. Pitch with passion

The most advantageous thing you can do when speaking with someone about financially supporting your church plant is to “pitch with passion”. In other words, speak from your heart. Remember that the dream and vision God has given you is a dream and vision that came from The Living God. When you think about it, you get excited. You get pumped up. It is the first thing you are thinking about in the morning and the last thing you are thinking about when you fall asleep. It is for that reason that you need to share your heart.

SPEAK FROM THE HEART

People can tell the difference between when you are just telling them what you think they want to hear and when you are actually speaking from the heart. And it is when you are sharing from your heart about your dream and vision for the church that it begins to become real for others, too. Therefore, be encouraged to speak from your heart; for when you do, you are giving people a chance to partner with you.

Now, before we conclude this eBook, let us look at the fifth and final step that will help you to begin raising finances for your church plant.



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STEP 5:

TAP INTO THE WEALTH

It was said earlier in this eBook, but it is worth repeating again. When it comes to church planting, the struggle remains that church planters do not like asking for money. However, the fact that church plants need money to succeed is just a simple reality of the church world today. As you implement the steps mentioned in this eBook, you quickly begin to realize that raising finances for your church plant is for people and not from people. You begin to realize that the whole process of raising finances is for a larger purpose; larger than both you and your donors.

However, as a church planter, you still need help. You need guidance. You need support. That is why it is imperative for you to find someone who has already had the experience of planting a church and tap into his wealth of knowledge. Find out what worked, what did not work, and why. Using him as a sounding board for ideas you may have about raising finances, allow that individual to mentor you throughout this journey. Far too often, church planters attempt to traverse this journey alone, and they end up doubting whether or not they really heard from God; or worse, their church plant does not succeed. May you be encouraged in the reality that you are not alone, and may you be challenged to tap into the wealth of those who have gone before you.





SUMMARY

There is a popular saying: “It takes a whole village to raise a child”. In a similar fashion, we say that it takes multiple people to plant a church. Yes, you are the one that God called to plant the church, but it was never in His plan, nor will it ever be, for you to do it alone.

In this eBook, we took time to discuss the reality that it takes money to plant a church. And because of that, you, as the church planter, need to know how to raise finances for your church plant. Throughout the eBook, we discussed 5 simple steps to help you begin raising finances for this church:

Step 1: Be Realistic

Step 2: Expand your Knowledge

Step 3: Be Aware

Step 4: Have a Plan

Step 5: Tap Into the Wealth

While this is not an exhaustive plan on how to raise finances, we do honestly believe that if you begin to implement these steps, your experience with raising finances will be a fruitful one.

Remember, in a similar manner to Peter in Matthew 14, “If you want to walk on water, you’ve got to get out of the boat.”

John Ortberg

ABOUT StartCHURCH

StartCHURCH is a company dedicated to meeting the needs of pastors, leaders and church boards that have a vision to make a difference in their communities through establishing new churches and ministries. Knowing that churches face increased scrutiny, StartCHURCH answered the call to be a voice to the Body of Christ by educating and empowering men and women of God not only to start their churches, but also to run and manage them better.

StartCHURCH believes in helping those who feel called to leadership within the Body of Christ. To that end, the authors have designed all products and services to aid ministers in fulfilling the call of God on their lives. Most of the resources have been authored by Reverend Raul Rivera, who has over 18 years of extensive experience researching the compliance issues that surround religious and non-profit organizations. Using simple day-to-day language, Raul has created more than 80 effective and user-friendly manuals and compliance software and document packages, such as the StartRIGHT™ Program, to make church starts and management easier.

Raul and his wife, Genel, have also used their years of ministry experience to help serve the community in which they live. They have witnessed the powerful way that hearts and lives are opened before them for the gospel, simply by using opportunities that the Lord puts before them to make a difference through giving and serving others.



