

# Give Them Choices!

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## ***People Like Choices***

In church giving, we often forget that our members have many options for their contributions and seem to assume that they will just give us however much money we want—if we ask them or not! This is one of the reasons why churches are hurting for money: we often don't ask our members and rarely explain why giving to the church is important. Rest assured that every other non-profit is more than happy to explain their mission and to invite support!

## ***We Are Afraid of Choices***

Some churches are afraid that if we offer our members a lot of options, our members will choose to give their contributions in ways we don't want them. This will happen—if we're not open and honest, and tell them the church's priorities. Some are afraid that if we offer our members choices, they will not receive enough to fund our budgets. Ironically, most congregations receive more money when members are offered these choices!

## ***Four Choices for Our Members***

The way I see it, our members have at least four ways they can support the church's mission. I would love to see each congregation encouraging all four. Here they are:

1. **Annual Gifts.** These gifts support the church's ongoing ministry—year after year. It is the foundation of all that we do, from the local light bill to hospital supplies for Nepal.
2. **Campaign Gifts.** When the church decides it wants to do a special emphasis or project, i.e. a new roof or One Great Hour of Sharing, we invite our members to support it with gifts above-and-beyond their annual gifts. I call these Campaign Gifts because the church usually does some sort of special campaign to promote the cause and invite support.
3. **Special Gifts.** Some people have a special concern for a particular ministry, and like to contribute special gifts to support it. Whether it be the Youth (every church I've served had several members who contributed here), Music or the Building Fund, members gave because they wanted to make sure there was enough—or even something special—here. The church isn't encouraging every member to consider these special gifts; some people just like to give them.
4. **Deferred Gifts.** Estate gifts make up the largest part of this category, but any gift that is committed earlier and given later will fit. Large or small, deferred gifts are usually unexpected and greatly appreciated gifts.

## ***Does your church encourage all four of these gifts?***

If it doesn't, you are robbing your members of countless choices and opportunities to support our church's ministry and mission. If you're interested in discovering ways to offer your members choices, give me a call. I would love to discuss the possibilities with you.

***We're all in this together!***