

What Gets in the Way of Generosity?

Five steps toward a more faithful invitation to give

Before we ask, “Why aren’t people giving?”

Ask, “What might be getting in the way?”



*Strengthening
Charitable Causes To
Change The World
Through Generosity*

Giving is a response—not a church invoice



Grace

Before obligation.

Generosity responds to what God has given.

Mission

Before money.

Money serves ministry; it is not its purpose.

Freedom

Without pressure.

Invite participation while honoring real limits.

Five steps to a gift

01

Identify

Do you know me?

02

Inform

What is the plan?

03

Inspire

Why does it matter?

04

Invite

What is the ask?

05

Impact / Thank

Did it make a difference?

A relationship to nurture—not a formula to control.

We assume we know our people

What gets in the way

Same message for every household.

Contact mainly when we need a gift.

A more faithful practice

Listen before planning.

Learn people's hopes, questions, and circumstances.

Try this: five listening conversations without a financial request.

We explain the cost—but not the purpose

What gets in the way

Lead with a deficit.

Share totals, jargon, and unexplained assumptions.

A more faithful practice

Explain the ministry and the numbers.

Name the goal, timeline, use of funds, and reporting plan.

Ask: Could someone explain our plan accurately to a neighbor?

We report activity—but miss meaning

What gets in the way

“We held six grief-group meetings.”

“We need a new entrance.”

A more faithful practice

“Neighbors can grieve without being alone.”

“People can enter with dignity.”

Try this: pair one clear fact with one truthful account of why it matters.

We hint, apologize—or pressure

What gets in the way

“You know what to do.”

“If everyone really cared...”

A more faithful practice

Name the response clearly.

Allow time, questions, prayer, and an honest decision.

Ask: what are we inviting people to do—and by when?

We celebrate the total—and stop

What gets in the way

Thank people only before the next ask.

Report dollars, but not progress or changes.

A more faithful practice

Thank people for participating.

Explain what happened, what remains, and what changed.

Before launch: assign responsibility for gratitude and reporting.

Practice: move from cost to invitation

“Our annual utility cost has increased by \$8,000.
Please increase your pledge.”

Rewrite it with:

1. Honest financial information
2. A clear connection to ministry
3. A specific, respectful invitation

Debrief: what did you add besides more words?



One framework. Five different purposes.

Annual appeal

Sustain ongoing ministry.

Special appeal

Respond to a defined need or opportunity.

Capital campaign

Fund a substantial, longer-term investment.

Debt reduction

Reduce an existing financial obligation.

Planned Giving

Estate gifts often used to for endowment funds.

Annual and special appeals

Annual: ongoing ministry

Identify: listen across the congregation.
Inform: explain next year's ministry plan.
Inspire: show its meaning.
Invite: ask for an annual commitment.
Thank: report throughout the year.

Special: a defined response

Identify: listen for connection to the need.
Inform: set purpose, goal, and deadline.
Inspire: explain why it matters now.
Invite: make a clear, time-bound ask.
Thank: report completion and use of funds.

Capital: connect the project to ministry

Before the invitation

Identify: listen before settling the plan.

Inform: explain scope, cost, timeline, readiness, and risks.

Inspire: connect the investment to a credible ministry purpose.

During and after

Invite: define the commitment period and relationship to annual giving.

Impact/Thank: report commitments, receipts, project progress, and changes.

Debt reduction: be precise about the promise

Build understanding

Identify: hear questions about the debt.

Inform: explain balance, terms, and proposed reduction.

Inspire: name what verified relief could make possible.

Make a credible invitation

Invite: clarify the period and relationship to annual giving.

Impact/Thank: report principal reduction and actual financial changes.

A lower balance does not automatically mean a lower required payment.

Where is your next invitation weakest?

Choose one upcoming appeal. Mark each step:

Identify — Have we listened?

Inform — Is the plan clear?

Inspire — Is the meaning visible?

Invite — Is the response clear?

Impact/Thank — Is follow-through planned?

“In the next 30 days, we will strengthen _____ by _____.”

READY

Clear and prepared

NEEDS ATTENTION

Present but incomplete

MISSING

No plan yet

Before asking for more, strengthen the invitation.

Listen before planning.

Explain honestly.

Connect money to mission.

Invite clearly.

Thank and report back.

We cannot control generosity. We can care for the invitation.



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Questions & conversation

What is one invitation your congregation needs to approach differently?

Paul Walters Consulting
paulewalters.com

Sources & responsible use

Scripture: Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Theological frame: grace, willingness, means, and freedom from compulsion.

GSB — Building a Culture of Generosity

bcg.gsbfundraising.com

GSB — Stewardship for All Seasons

gsbfundraising.com/services/stewardship-for-all-seasons/

Paulewalters.com