

# Preparing the Offering Schedule

Creating the offering schedule is a serious exercise intended to help those who come on Sunday to cheerfully present their offerings in the context of celebration and worship of God.

The offering schedule needs to mirror your church's stewardship plans and reflect the direction of the congregation in ministry.

## Do

- ensure each offering has a purpose
- base each offering on need
- research each offering before selecting it

## DON'T

- repeat last year's offering schedule
- base offerings on tradition
- plan offerings for miscellaneous causes

**DECIDE** which deacons will plan the offering schedule. Include 1-2 members of the congregation.

**ANNOUNCE** the offering schedule preparation to the congregation and invite input.

**DETERMINE** the number of offering opportunities; the number of offerings taken in each church is different. In addition to the 52 Sundays, factor in special services: Prayer Day, Thanksgiving, Good Friday, Ascension, Christmas, New Year's Eve/Day

**SORT** the requests into categories: denominational & diaconal ministry shares, community ministries, Christian education, and others. Check the CRC Yearbook for causes recommended by Synod.

**REQUEST** additional information on ministries and organizations that ask for your support (mission statements, descriptions, financial statements etc.)



## More Than A Collection

It is clear that the offering is more than a collection. And the preparation of the schedule is more than a collection schedule. It is a careful plan to help God's people "excel in the grace of giving" (2 Cor. 8:7).

### How does your church grow in the grace of giving?

#### 1. Give Regularly (1 Cor. 16:2):

The offering is the time to bring what has been set aside for the first day of the week. This regular pattern of giving is essential.

#### 2. Give of our Firstfruits (Romans 12:1):

Giving is an expression of our thanksgiving response to God for His gift to us in Christ. We need to give; we need to offer our firstfruits as a symbol of offering ourselves as "living sacrifices."

#### 3. Give Generously (2 Cor. 8:2):

People need to be taught to give generously for their own spiritual well-being (2 Cor. 9:5,11). It does not come naturally, but it *will* come when their hearts are open to God's grace and they want to thank God for the work of grace in their lives.

#### 4. Give Proportionately (2 Cor. 8:3):

People need to be encouraged to give in proportion to how the Lord has blessed them. That is not a flat rate; it assumes differences in the ability to give. It invites people to give as they "are able," and to consider giving sacrificially, "even beyond their ability."

#### 5. Give Cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7):

We need to help people discover the joy of giving. The spirit of thankfulness should predominate the offering time, and information about the offering should be presented with joy!

#### 6. Give Knowingly:

The congregation assumes that careful thought has gone into the offering schedule. They assume the deacons know enough about each cause that it deserves to be a priority in their giving. That is why it is important to explain each offering.



# Creating the Schedule

Here are some basic steps to remember:

1. Make a list of all offerings (based on the guidelines at the right)
2. Use a calendar –the CRCNA Communications Office provides one for you or [find it online](#) .
3. Identify on which Sundays specific offerings are requested: these are listed on the offering calendar.
4. Identify special Sundays in your own congregation (i.e. Lord Supper Sundays, benevolent funds, diaconal causes, World Renew, Mission Sundays, Christian education etc). Deduct those from the total yearly offering spaces.
5. Touch base with the pastor, worship committee or others in the congregation who plan the church's activities.
6. Use creativity in completing and assigning the balance of offerings (those may include specialized like chaplaincy ministries, Shalem, Beginnings, Disability Concerns, or specific community needs.
7. Plan an effective way of informing the congregation and explaining about each offering. Make an announcement during the service, if possible –possibly even the week before.
8. Pray for the ministries you support, before and after the offerings. Be as specific about the ministry's needs as you are able.

## Some Guidelines to Consider

- Keep the congregation's ministry priorities clearly in mind.
- Base the benevolence offerings on need, not tradition (i.e. 1 offering/month for the deacons)
- Budget for both diaconal and denominational ministry shares –and know which ministries do not receive shares (i.e. World Renew)
- Budget for local congregational activities (i.e. church education, GEMS, cadets, youth and senior programs, Coffee Break, small groups, evangelism). Funds needed for these activities need not necessarily come from offerings.
- Develop a policy for support offerings (i.e. Christian education) and be very specific in informing the congregation of the amount required and the schools that will be recipients.
- Others? Create your own guidelines...



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