

Inactive Members

A STEWARDSHIP RESOURCE



How Deacons can care for and minister to members who do not support the church financially

WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?

This responsibility should be shared between elders and deacons. Working together on challenges like these will build up the Body of Christ and its leaders.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN MAKING THE VISIT:

- **Assume that the family or member is committed to Christ and His church.** A change in giving patterns does not necessarily imply spiritual problems (eg. the family business may be on the verge of bankruptcy). Approach the visit with a spirit of inquiry, not a spirit of judgment.
- **Go in the spirit of helpfulness.** The purpose of all visits, whether about financial or other responsibilities, is to build up the church member, and to help him or her grow in commitment to Jesus Christ. The goal is to help the member or family resolve whatever stands in the way of feeling ownership of the church ministries – be it financial difficulties, anger at the church, or sheer indifference to responsibilities.
- **Follow your usual guidelines for making visits.** Be clear about the purpose of the visit, set a definite time, and stick to that schedule. Do not get distracted by small talk or other issues.
- **Throughout the visit, ask good questions and listen well to what is being said, and not being said.** Remember that your primary role, at this point, is to listen to understand the member(s).

GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

- **A good start or approach** is to ask the member what the church could do differently to help him or her be more willing to contribute more generously.
- **Read through 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 together**, emphasizing how these chapters offer some biblical principles about giving (it should be done regularly, cheerfully, generously, etc). Ask the member for their thoughts and insights on these chapters.
- **Remember that giving financially is only a part of our stewardship to God.** A member's offering/gift of time and talents is a significant part of our gratitude for God's grace. If appropriate, take time to honour the ways they have served in your church and community.

REMEMBER!

Each church member needs to experience the "joy" of giving.

- **Take time to pray during the visit** - before, during and/or after, so that the Lord may use it to build up the member, the church body, and God's kingdom.
- **Whatever the outcome, it is important that there is follow-up.** If needed, the deacons should follow up to show their concern about the member's financial needs. If the member's giving pattern improves, acknowledge this with a phone call or another visit. If their giving pattern does not change, that may prompt the need for another visit.

NEED MORE HELP?

Phone: 1-800-730-3490 x4304

E-mail: dmc@crcna.org

www.diaconalministries.com