

# Good Orthodox Christian Stewardship Practices

## Key Practices/Principles

1. You need a method – “Pledging” preferred
2. You have to ask.
3. Leaders lead – Parish Council pledges *first*
4. Stewardship before fund raising – *bake sales; bingo & incessant special collections*
5. Many pre-requisites: (see box >>>>)
6. Need stewardship goals – *median pledge; participation rate*
7. Tithing is Orthodox
8. Start Early – *youth; newbies; annual cycle*  
*“The second half of a man’s life is made up of the habits he acquired in the first half” Dostoyevsky*
9. Priorities -- Not budgets
10. Say “Thank you” -- Often
11. Spiritual & Practical - Giving connected to Spiritual Growth
12. Not for sissies!

## Factors Affecting Our Ability to Improve Donation Levels in Our Parish

Driving Forces >>>>	<<<<Retarding Forces
Dire need	“Habit”
Understanding our relative wealth	“Don’t have it”
We have an opportunity here to...	Don’t understand stewardship “Parish council not in favor”
Love of God	Lack trust that God will provide
Love of parish –want it cared for	“Waste” “we spend too much” / Poor fiscal mgt
Opportunities for ministry	Incessant special collections
My donation has enduring value	We’re prolonging the inevitable; We look backward not forward
Sense of concern for others	Insular/ inward view
Gratitude for our inheritance	“We’re getting by” (real /imagined)
Our identity as people of God	“I give my time”
Sense of responsibility Sense of future	Fear negative reaction to asking

## Set Member Expectations

1. **Confession/Communion**
  2. **Regular Attendance**
  3. **Pray Regularly**
  4. **Pledge first fruits**
  5. **Study/Grow in Faith**
  6. **Accept a Ministry**  
*Time & talent*
  7. **Spread the Gospel**  
*Use words & example*
- Members are those Orthodox Christians who understand what it means to build up the body of Christ. They do this by making a true commitment to our parish. Membership makes a person’s baptismal vows specific to the parish, its work and its people.

## Pre-Requisites

1. Sense of membership/ commitment
2. Good fiscal practice/ orderly parish
3. Parish Vision –sense of direction/future
4. Structured ministries – landing places
5. Pledge Effort

## Needed Resources/Actions

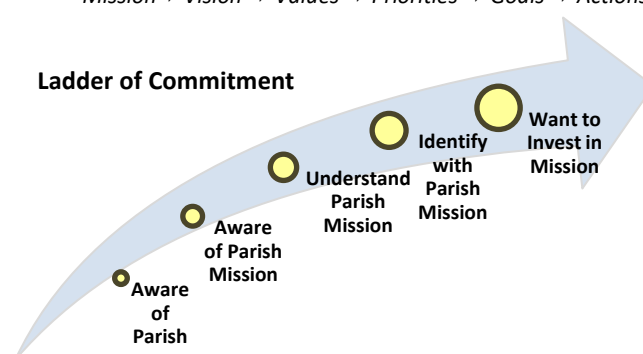
- Defined member expectations  
New member manual; Assimilation efforts
- Regular reports; good software; Treasurer; Well run annual meeting
- Mission and Vision Priorities ♦  
Vision budget ♦ Ability to dialogue
- Leader development; Ministry plan  
Ministry oriented Parish Council  
Ministries brochure
- Stewardship team ♦ Stewardship formation – young/old ♦ Pledge form ♦ Letter ♦ Brochure, ♦ FAQ ♦ Segmented f/u plan

## Vision

- People give because they believe in the result. A solid future
- Helps us give greater attention to future generations – not ourselves.
- “What can we do for this parish today for the sake of this parish tomorrow?”

Mission ⇒ Vision ⇒ Values ⇒ Priorities ⇒ Goals ⇒ Actions

## Ladder of Commitment



Does our parish have a vision big enough to generate a donation of \$10K? \$100K

## Useful Stewardship Questions

1. How do you view the role of money in your life?
2. Is generosity a core value of a Christian?
3. Is it possible to lead miserly lives (*or lives of great indulgence*) while giving little to the church or other charitable organizations yet attending and considering oneself to be a person of faith?
4. How do you decide what you will give back to your parish?
5. Have you considered tithing/proportional giving? Why? Why Not?
6. How important is the parish/Orthodox Church to you and your family? Vs. *other aspects of your life*.
7. What is our responsibility to future members of this parish... our children of ... and their children?
8. What do we need to be doing for them?
9. What is our parish’s responsibility outside our walls?
10. How well do we meet it?
11. What aren’t we doing that we should be in the parish?
12. What would it take? What would you need to see the parish doing for you to become truly enthusiastic about making a meaningful pledge to the parish?

*Our*  
**Identity** *as Christians*

It is easy to understand that we are created *by* God. Understanding the spiritual dimension of stewardship reminds us that we are created *for* God.

We are His servant. Our bodies are not our own. We are not our own – and all the things we have are not our own.

We are stewards of what God has given us.

*...teaches us to...*

**Trust God**

As people created *for* God we trust God. We remember that God, not us, makes things happen.

God provides what is important ... though not necessarily what we want.

In order to receive God's trust we need to be *trustworthy*. We express this, in part, by how we handle our material resources.

*...and enlivens a spirit of...*

**Gratitude**

Gratitude is born from trust -- and being trustworthy. We gratefully focus on things *given* to us. We see everything as a gift.

In the liturgy we act accordingly by gratefully giving back to God -- "thine own of thine own we offer unto thee".

Gratitude helps us to appreciate what we *do* have and to stop seeking what we *don't* need.

*...reminding us to give back to God in*  
**Love...** *to care for His Church*

Love is a requirement of being a Christian. It is not optional.

Giving helps us *not* focus on ourselves. **If we are required to love then we also must be able to give.**

Loving spouses share a mutuality of receiving *and* giving. If we only received that would not be love. *We give back to return the love.*

It becomes the challenge of a steward to see the Church not as a building or even a collection of people but as *someone* we love. We then see the responsibility - expectations & accountability - that comes with that loving relationship.

If we can love a spouse we can love the Church. Treat the church the same way you would treat your spouse. **Is she well provided for?**

**A Spiritual View of Stewardship: *Identity, Trust, Gratitude & Love***