

The  
**Stewardship**  
JOURNAL  
April 12, 2021

**From the Desk of Our  
Executive Director**

**How to Increase Summer Giving**

**Fully Funded Summer  
Planning Edition**

**How to Avoid a Summer  
Slump in Giving**

**What Does 83% Mean for  
the Destiny of Children?**

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

## From the Desk of Our Executive Director

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**When it comes to giving, summer is one of the most challenging times for the typical church.** In this issue of *The Stewardship Journal*, we begin sharing with you concepts and strategies to help you be fully funded this summer. In this edition, you will hear from seasoned veterans who have successfully managed summer giving. Our prayer is that every MBC church thrives financially this summer with the information contained in this issue!

**Here is a preview of what you can expect in the pages that follow.**

First, Spencer Hudson, retired stewardship director for the MBC and now with Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries, shares a post entitled, "**How to Increase Summer Giving.**" Don't miss his four key steps on how to increase your summer giving.

Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, continues on the summer giving theme with his post entitled, **Fully Funded Summer Planning Edition**. Here is a quote from Mark that sums up the challenge of summer giving: "in summer, you spend more during a time when you are typically receiving less." Mark's steps give you a better chance of funding all your summer's mission and ministry endeavors.

In our **Bonus Section**, Dr. Ronnie Floyd was gracious to allow us to print a section from his book, **Ten Percent: A Call to Biblical Stewardship**. His post is entitled, "**How to Avoid a Summer Slump in Giving.**" Here is a quote from Dr. Floyd: "We learned if we could find a way to create consistency in giving during this challenging season, it would have an impact on the entire year. Our simple plan helped lead to financial support in a way that was above and beyond what we ever imagined." He then shares practical points on making your summer giving have an impact on the entire year.

**Offering Talk** – We have found that churches who elevate the offering time raise more funds. Every week we provide you with a talk to set up your offering. This week's talk is entitled, "**What Does 83% Mean for the Destiny of Children?**" It's a great talk that gives you a chance to highlight your summer ministries.

We believe this will be an action-packed summer for all our churches! By following the steps in this week's Journal, we believe you can be fully funded this summer.

Advancing the Gospel!



Dr. John Yeats

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# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

## How to Increase Summer Giving

Spencer Hudson, Church Relations Specialist, Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries

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**If you are going to be fully funded this year, you had better know how to increase summer giving!** Giving in the summer always goes down. Why? Your members go to the lake, and they take their offering with them. They go to the mountains, and they take their offering with them. They go and see Mickey, and they take their offering with them. The bottom line is that in the summer, as your attendance declines, so does your offering.

**If you know that is a fact, why not do something to correct it?** Every pastor and church leader knows that summer giving is a challenge. Yet, few have any plans to do anything about it. If, year after year, summer after summer, your giving has declined, why would you think this year would be any different? It won't. It won't unless you have a plan.

Do you have a plan? If you don't have a plan, you are planning on failing.

### Key Advice for Increasing Summer Giving

- 1. Get a plan and work your plan!** What we plan for, we achieve. What we fail to plan for, we miss. One reason we created *The Stewardship Journal* was to provide you with plans for every season of a church's life, including summer.
- 2. Set up the tools to help you increase summer giving.** The best tool for helping churches head off a decline in summer giving is to set up an online giving platform. Online giving allows members to set up their gifts to be automatic. Tools, such as recurring giving, assure the funds you need during the summer months.
- 3. Use all your tools to highlight the value of what you are doing during the summer.** Fundraisers realize that they have to use more than one platform to raise funds. Consider using your social media sites to highlight the importance of giving. Use direct mail to garner an increase in giving. Emails that are well written and provide a direct link to your giving page will help you increase giving. Even the moments before the offering, if used wisely, can help giving increase instead of decrease during the summer.
- 4. Ask the right way!** I once received a letter from a church that asked me to give to help them pay the electric bill because of the hot summer. Other letters have been sent appealing to donors to make up a budget shortfall. Those kinds of "asks" simply drive donors away rather than help you increase donations. Why? People don't give so you can make a budget! They give to see you make a difference. So, tell the story of all that you are doing to help build the Kingdom.

Simply utilizing these four steps will allow you to see an increase in giving this summer. Again, you know this summer will be a challenge, so why wait? Let's work to fully fund your summer this year!

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Current Events and Relevant Thoughts From:

## The Stewardship Coach

Mark Brooks

### Fully Funded Summer Planning Edition



**It's time to think about summer.** Welcome to the 2021 edition of The Stewardship Coach's "**Fully Funded Summer Planning Edition.**"

Right after Easter, I like to shift gears and begin thinking about making sure your summer is fully funded. Starting your thinking and planning now will give you a better assurance of having the funds you need for the year's most stressful budget time. Summer is a stress on your budget first because we typically do the majority of our most costly ministry at this time. At the same time, attendance falls off which, in turn, impacts giving. So, in summer, you spend more during a time when you are typically receiving less.

**The Three Keys for Summer Planning** - My focus with clients is upon getting them started on the three keys for summer planning. As with all giving plans, you must first:

**1. Set the Vision for your summer giving initiative.** Every appeal needs its own vision that drives a donor to give you more. Those communicated needs are the "drivers" that will either drive me to my wallet in support of them or cause me to throw the appeal away.

**The more compelling the driver, the more likely you are to get a response.** Tell your donors *why* giving to this cause is important and impactful.

Your vision has to be **clear, concise**, and, most of all, **compelling**. The same is true for every appeal you make. The driver, like your vision, must be clear, concise, and compelling, or you will not succeed. I call that **The Three C's of Vision**.

**What is the story behind your summer?** Each mission and ministry initiative has a story behind it. Telling that story effectively will increase your chance of giving. Encourage your ministry leaders about their stories this summer.

**Spend the next few weeks nailing down the vision for your summer giving.** Apply the Three C's of vision, and you will raise more dollars. After you have your vision, message, and story down, you need to next...

**2. Build the infrastructure required for a successful summer giving initiative.** For your summer giving plan to be truly successful, you need to make sure you have what I call the Basic Building Blocks of Support. Briefly, here is my list of blocks that you need to immediately start working towards if you don't have them now.

**Database** – Make sure your database is up to date and applicable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You should have your database broken out into key segments. For instance, the top 15% of your donors should make up one list. Another might be those that give less than \$200 or first-time donors. My point is that you should never treat every donor the same in terms of messaging.

**Digital Footprint** – Here are the basics that are a MUST for this Digital Age we live in.

**Website** – You must have a robust and up-to-date website. You will want to use your website to highlight your summer giving plan.

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## Fully Funded Summer Planning Edition

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**Social Media** – At a minimum, I think a church should have Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as its Social Media base. You will want to use your Social Media footprint extensively to highlight your summer offering. I call it show and tell giving, and social media is great at this.

**Online Giving** – COVID-19 showed everyone the importance of a good online giving base. From text giving to a great online page, this platform is crucial for giving success.

**Offering envelopes** – While envelopes might seem old school, they nonetheless are an effective means of collecting donations. However, it's essential that your envelope has a postage-paid meter stamp on it. After your infrastructure is set, then:

### **3. Prime the pump to assure a successful summer giving initiative.** This recommendation comes in two parts.

**Leaders First!** When I talk about priming the pump, I want you to communicate early in the process with your giving leaders, laying out the summer giving plan. This builds confidence in your donors that you plan to increase giving so that it doesn't entirely fall upon them to save the day. It also lets them know that the appeals and communications you are putting out are directed to gain new donors, not merely dog your current ones to death.

**Make May a push for setting up recurring giving.** Again, here is another lesson from COVID-19 that shows the value of recurring giving. I push for recurring giving two times annually, in January and in May. Recurring giving will help even out your summer giving, alleviating those potentially stressful Monday, July mornings counting an empty offering plate!

**15 weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day will determine how your financial year goes.** Start thinking, praying, and planning now for a great summer of giving!



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach  
[mark@acts17generosity.com](mailto:mark@acts17generosity.com)

Find out how to access all of my playbooks at <https://acts17generosity.com/store/>.

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## Bonus Material

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### How to Avoid a Summer Slump in Giving

The following is an excerpt from Dr. Ronnie Floyd's book, *Ten Percent: A Call to Biblical Stewardship*. For a free copy go to <https://www.sbc.net/stewardship/>.

In my early years of pastoring, I learned about the "summer slump" in attendance and giving. That is why more than 20 years ago at Cross Church of Northwest Arkansas, we implemented a strategy that was a success with our people. We learned if we could find a way to create consistency in giving during this challenging season, it would have an impact on the entire year. Our simple plan helped lead to financial support in a way that was above and beyond what we ever imagined.

Here are steps you can implement in your church.

1. Determine how many weeks exist between the Sunday before Memorial Day and the Sunday before Labor Day. For our example year, we will use 16 weeks. (In most summers, there are 15 weekends.)
  2. Determine the weekly budget requirement. For our example, we will use a budget of \$520,000 annually. That would mean the weekly budget requirement is \$10,000. Remember, this strategy works with any size budget.
  3. Multiply the weekly budget requirement by the number of weeks. Using our example, this makes the summer giving goal \$160,000.
  4. Announce to your church family by mid-May what your summer giving goal will be for your church. For example, a pastor would tell his church on a Sunday in mid-May: "Church Family, we have sixteen Sundays between Memorial Day Sunday and Labor Day Sunday. I want to announce that we are setting a summer giving goal of \$160,000 to be given over these sixteen weeks. This is important because summer ministries operate at an optimum level and we need our giving to support it regardless of our vacations or time away with family." Additionally, on the Monday before the beginning of your summer goal, send a letter to your church family, challenging them to join you in seeing this happen.
  5. Challenge people to be faithful to give the first tenth of all God has given them personally, regardless of where they are during the summer season. This goal will maintain focus and remind each person to exhibit stewardship weekly and personally so the church can do things faithfully and fruitfully. I believe the summer is a great opportunity for churches everywhere.
  6. Publicize your summer goal for weekly giving in all your communications; in other words, keep it before the people regularly.
  7. Inform the people personally and through all communications of the real-time status of your goal every Sunday. We did this through a gauge that looked like a thermometer. You can choose a graphic that is clear and simple. This will keep it before your people strategically each week.
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## How to Avoid a Summer Slump in Giving

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8. Each Sunday, connect a ministry experience with the offering and goal. For example, if your church has a Vacation Bible School, you can say something like: "This past week, we were able to reach one hundred children through our Vacation Bible School, and twelve of these children came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Church Family, without your financial support, this would not be possible.

But today we rejoice, knowing God has used each of us, through our support, to be part of seeing one hundred children learn about Jesus and twelve make public decisions to follow Jesus." A sixty to ninety-second story before the offering each week will result in great response. Dollars follow vision, especially vision that results in lives being changed by Jesus Christ.

9. During mid-summer, perhaps in the second week of July, produce a short newsletter and video, if possible, to share the great wins that have occurred in your church during the first half of the summer. Additionally, give the status of where you are with your goal and make another challenge relating to it.
10. Follow through, finish well, and celebrate what God has done. Never apologize to your people while talking about what God is doing and letting them know how they can personally participate in ministry and financial support. Whether the goal is reached or not, celebrate.

A summer giving goal, resourcing the needs of your church throughout the summer, is really an opportunity budget. You are giving your church family the opportunity to go on mission with God together. Together, you can go so much farther and do so much more than anyone can do alone.

Tell the story of what God is doing. When you do these things, your church will avoid experiencing a summer slump in giving.

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## Missions and Ministry Moment: Setting Up Your Offering

Every week we provide what are called *offering talks*. We have found that the easiest way to see an increase in giving is to improve how you approach the offering time. Instead of telling people they don't have to give, we like to show them what giving to a church accomplishes. By showing people your mission and ministry focus, you create a desire in your attendees to *want* to give to support that life change. That's why we call them Missions and Ministry Moments.

You can read them exactly how we write them or use them as idea starters for how the message would fit your culture and context. Our goal is to develop lifetime stewards, but we must get the first gift to begin them on the journey. Here is this week's offering talk.

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## What Does 83% Mean for the Destiny of Children?

**83%.** According to a study by the International Bible Society, that is the percentage of all Christians that make their commitment to Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14. There exists a **window of opportunity**, therefore, to reach children during these key ages. If they don't accept Christ during those formative years, then it becomes increasingly more problematic they ever will. Studies have found that those from age 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians.

**This summer, we will hold multiple events to reach that window of opportunity.** Consider that we will... (list your own various events):

- Have hundreds of children here soon for VBS.
- Send our Student Ministry to summer camp soon.
- Send teams to the inner city for mission VBS.
- Continue all our regular weekly activities for children and students.

**We are serious about reaching the next generation for Christ, and your generous gifts allow us to do this!** As our ushers come forward, we want to encourage you to faithfully give so that all our ministries to children and students can be fully funded.

**Every time you give, you help us make the 83% window become a reality for our kids!**

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