

5 Disciplines of Financially Thriving Churches (Disciplines 1, 2, & 3) Key Ideas and Observations

The foundation of your ministry is your vision. Vision is your preferred future. **Goals** create measurable pictures of what achieving your vision looks like. **Strategies** are your plans to achieve your goals.

Discipline 1: Keep it Spiritual. Discipleship must be the foundation of any generosity initiative because generosity is a by-product of making disciples. Thriving churches overwhelmingly use a discipleship path or a set of spiritual practices that include generosity to guide their discipleship engagement strategy. It is spiritual before it is financial. Spiritual growth and formation should be the center of all generosity and discipleship initiatives.

Keeping It Spiritual Best Practices:

1. **Create a clearly articulated theology of generosity**
2. **Establish a generosity team**
3. **Create a discipleship path - Example: worship, study, serve, give, share**
4. **Establish clear expectations of leadership regarding the discipleship path**

Discipline 2: Tell Your Ministry Impact Stories. Look for every opportunity to share stories of ministry impact that effectively communicate how the church is transforming lives. Doing so cuts through the destructive messages culture sends about money and connects giving and the impact it makes possible.

Telling Stories of Impact Best Practices:

1. **Frequent use of impact storytelling**
2. **Focus stories on a single individual whose life was changed**
3. **Offering Talks**
4. **Use donor-centric words and phrases**
5. **Personalize and segment donor communications**

Discipline 3: Building Donor Relationships. A church's relationship with its financial supporters is sacred and requires careful cultivation. Pastors and key staff must have access to and actively use donor giving records for the purpose of developing spiritual growth, including financial generosity. Financially thriving churches tend to actively seek to identify people with high capacities of talents, time, and financial resources. Once identified they are intentional about seeking to build authentic relationships.

The appropriate motivation for these relationships is to seek something for these people, such as joy and spiritual growth, rather than simply as a means to get resources from them. This is done by cultivating authentic personal relationships: learning their passions, motivations and stories, by asking for their wisdom and inviting them to serve in ways that fit their passions, giftedness, and time availability.

Building Donor Relationships Best Practices:

- 1. Pastors/key staff actively use donor giving records**
- 2. Financial leader and high capacity donor identification and engagement**
- 3. Build authentic personal relationships**
- 4. Donor recognition/appreciation systems**
- 5. Donor-centric focused communications**
- 6. Create opportunities for key donors to share their wisdom**