

Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

Reasons for Giving

The following chart is based on East Texas research: we asked people why they gave. What we have discovered is tied to "The Statistical Church" and to internal and external motivations. **The key to understanding these motivations is the key to any good stewardship education program.**

The Reasons for Giving chart can be amplified with consideration of the issues discovered by Abraham Maslow and presented in his famous "Hierarchy of Needs." The Rev. J. Hugh Magers has done considerable reflection on this issue. See [Maslow Meets Jesus](#).

People are NOT motivated by "shoulds" and "oughts."

Most of us know what we "should" and "ought" to do, whether it is lose weight, exercise or study harder. Teaching people they should tithe does not set them free to do so. Stewardship education programs that tell people what they should do, i.e., tithe, are as helpful as parents who tell their children to study more: a few might, most won't and some will do just the opposite. Discovering "why" people give is useful in preparing the way for new motivations.

Every year we ask the members of our congregations to make a pledge for the coming year. The message we send is interpreted (or responded to) by the people who receive it based on their individual attitudes about their relationship to God and the Church, the giving of money to the Church, and their emotional state. While this package of theory on the reasons people give, or don't give, to the Church can be useful for some who hear it, for others it may cause some difficulty because of the labels it places on people.

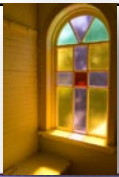
Remember this material is not meant to be judgmental. God loves each and every one of us right where we are. And God doesn't want us to stay there!

This can be a very useful tool if used to reveal the story of your personal Journey of growth in your attitude to giving - your growth from giving for External Reasons to giving for Internal Reasons. Your journey is how you came to have a new "Attitude of Gratitude" and how that has made a difference in your life.

Reasons for Giving				
When I come or Nothing	Fair share or Dues Paying	Conversion	Tithers or % givers	Joyful Givers
Customers	Patrons		Partners	Family
External Factors Control Giving			Internal Factors Control Giving	

Customers (Consumers)

The attitude among this group is characterized by the word "customer." The Church is seen to exist in order to provide service. Although servant ministry is what we are about, the customer is not engaged in the community to serve, but to be served. If that service isn't



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up to par, then complaints are forthcoming. Common complaints are: "The sermon was too long." "The music was boring." "The people weren't friendly." Our consumer society spills into the church. Customers come in to forms.

Those Who Give Nothing: (10-20% of the congregation)

They all have reasons for not giving. When asked, about half will reply, "Nobody ever asked me." Others will say, "The church doesn't need my money." They look around and see the lights are on, the building is heated, the organist is there, and the preacher is preaching.

Ten percent are usually angry, often about crazy things that go back a long time. They are on the rolls and attend services occasionally.

Those Who Give When They Attend: (15-25% of the congregation)

These people give the \$5, \$10 and \$20 bill in the offering plate. The \$1-bills in the offering are often from those who pay by check and just can't stand to see the offering plate go by without putting something in it.

Essentially, those who give when they attend are paying for entertainment: music, sermon, liturgy, program, etc.

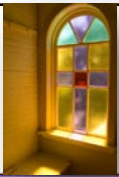
Patrons

Patrons make up the core of givers in the Church. They are the "Becomers" and "Casuals" who care for the church and seek to serve. Again, there seem to be two kinds of Patrons - Dues Payers and Fair Share Givers. Both Dues Payers and Fair Share Givers care deeply for the enterprise and are committed to its future.

Dues Payers: (15-30% of the membership)

Dues Payers are those who, in searching for an analogy for giving, have latched onto the concept of dues. The Church, in their minds, is an organization, and organizations collect dues to be able to function. Their pledge to the Church translates into dues, although few, if any, congregations actually publish dues. This group's issue is: what is the cost to belong? \$50 per month seems to be a cap on a "dues paying" attitude.

Dues Payers pledges tend to be in the range of \$150 to \$600 per year, which are similar to membership fees in Kiwanis, Rotary, or a health club.



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Fair Share Givers: (15-20% of the membership)

These folks use another familiar secular non-profit notion called "My fair share." Take the budget, divide by the number of members and you get a fair share amount. Fair share is not scriptural. God is not fair, God is merciful and loving.

Fair share gifts will range from \$400 -\$1,200 per year. They seldom give more than \$100 per month.

Patrons are affected by External Motivations for Giving

The critical issue for the Patrons is their motivation for giving.

Patrons tend to be motivated by the external needs of the church. Bills to be paid, salaries to be met and budgets honored are all factors coming from the outside. They can change from one year to the next and are often tied to the personality of the clergy in charge. "If I like Father Floyd, then I'll give more. If he refuses to perform the marriage service for my third cousin who has been divorced four times, then I'll cut my pledge."

- External motivations include:
 - Church's needs
 - Duty
 - Reactivity
 - Budget
 - Maintenance
 - Thanksgiving for past
 - Law driven

When giving is motivated by external factors, the Church is left vulnerable to shifting feelings and opinions. Even more important, external factors leave the Church in a maintenance mode, unable to move beyond the status quo to vision, mission and action.

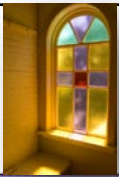
Changing behavior requires far more than telling people they "ought" to give more. Real change occurs only when motivations are shifted from the external to the internal. This shift is part of the mystery of God working in our lives. When doing stewardship education, information is helpful only up to a point. Our hopes and desires often exceed our ability to perform. As Paul so honestly put it, we do not do what we ought to do.

This description of motivations leads us to the next step.

To move from maintenance to mission or to move from external motivations to internal ones requires stepping out in faith, crossing the Red Sea of conversion.

Conversion of Patrons

Conversion is a step that calls for risk and surrender. For each of us on this journey into the mystery of Christ, there are moments when we see things differently, reach a turning point



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and come to a new understanding. In the New Testament there are two Greek words that are translated as the word conversion. They are Epistrophe and Metanoia.

Epistrophe has to do with turning around or a change in direction.

Metanoia has to do with coming to wholeness of mind or having new insight. (The opposite of metanoia is paranoia.)

These experiences of change come to us no matter where in the epistemology we find ourselves. They are God's work; we provide the opportunity. **This change of mind and change of heart leads to new ways of seeing our lives as stewards.** When the shift occurs, we can never go back. We know that we are stewards of God's grace and bounty, called to seek and to serve.

We call this conversion. Although this is uncommon language for many of us, it is part of becoming God's holy people.

Partners

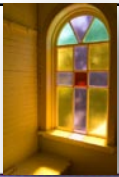
We affectionately refer to Percentage Givers and Tithers as Partners - because they are "partners with Christ" in the mission of the Church. Joyful Givers are those who give as "family." These two groups make up 9-12% of the Episcopal Church, according to George Gallup, and give as much as 65 - 75% of the Church's income. The amount they give is an intentional percentage of income. (The reality is that everyone who pledges is a proportional giver; but if the motivation to give is not an intentional percentage, they are not considered "Percentage Givers.")

Percentage Givers and Tithers:

Changed giving methodology begins with percentage giving. The tithe is the standard; amounts are irrelevant.

When individuals begin to see themselves as stewards, they often begin to think of their giving in new ways. **They are motivated internally by the need to give out of thankful response.** They seek to work with God for the mission of the Church. This internal shift changes the way they view mission. The view tends to be future-oriented: What is our vision? What is God calling us to do and be?

- **Internal motivations for giving include:**
 - My need to give
 - Love
 - Responsiveness
 - Mission of the Church
 - Anticipation of the future
 - Grace driven
 - Gratitude
 - Thanks-giving



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Tithers intentionally give at least 10% of their annual income for God's work in the world. The word tithe is mentioned 67 times in the Bible (65 times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament).

Family

Although all giving can be joyful, some receive the spiritual gift of generosity. These people understand the unity of the body and spirit and tend to live their lives with lavish abandonment. They are Joyful Givers.

Joyful Givers:

Joyful giving extends to every area of life. The idea of two worlds, sacred and secular, falls away and the world becomes one. In looking for ways to give, the Joyful Giver feels like a grandparent wanting to give gifts to grandchildren.

Joyful Givers typically give more than 10% of their annual income. Another way to think of the Joyful Giver is found in the passage from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. In 2 Cor. 9.7, Paul writes *"God loves a cheerful giver."* The Greek word translated as "cheerful" is hilarious, meaning hilarious, joyful. So the scripture could be translated "God loves a hilarious giver."

With the Spiritual Gift of Generosity you understand the unity of the body and spirit and live with lavish abandonment. For, "God loves a hilarious giver."

This information is a restatement from the "Diagnostic Devices" section of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship at www.tens.org and the TENS Manual for Stewardship Consultants/Mentors. For a copy of this manual contact TENS at 800.699.2669 or e-mail at tens@tens.org.