



5 Keys

TO CREATING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

SOLUTION GUIDE

The ministry ideas, how to's, tips and advice you need to develop a generous spirit at your church. PLUS... how our software, Realm®, can help you achieve this ministry goal.

Creating a Culture...

A culture is the collection of customs, social institutions, and achievements of a particular people. It is both a source and outcome of people's actions and responses. It's pervasive. A culture describes a people but also defines the outcomes you'd expect from them.

For the sake of this guide, a culture is a way of doing things that infiltrates every area of the organization or people. Basically, it's who you are.

CREATING A CULTURE IS NO EASY TASK.

In fact, to do it arbitrarily is impossible. It's more influenced, grown, and matured than created. But you have to start somewhere right? So let's dive in!



...of Generosity

Getting people to give is nice. Developing generous hearts is better. Imagine a church where a majority of people gave cheerfully as a normal, everyday way of living and not under compulsion. They didn't give as an obligation handed down by the leaders or motivated only by special campaigns and requests.

Your church can experience generosity as a way of life, 24/7.

The key to ongoing, increasing, and unfettered contributions to your ministry is found not in the next gimmick, campaign, or drive. The key to unlocking limitless potential is cultivating a healthy culture by developing healthy people who have generosity firmly rooted in their hearts and minds. This takes work, but with a little help and a mastery of the 5 most important components, your church will move from obligatory to abundant and from just enough to more than enough.

5 Keys

Much could be written on establishing and developing culture. Much has. More could be written about generosity, developing hearts and minds, and managing all the resources at your church. This is - obviously - not an exhaustive resource on all that giving, culture, and ministry entails (however, you can find more resources at: ministry.acst.com), but if you can master the 5 keys to creating a culture of generosity, you'll have planted a seed that should yield tenfold when fully matured in the context of the culture of your church.

#7

DON'T BE SCARED

We've found that the biggest mistake pastors and leaders make when dealing with money is not talking about it. Frankly, they are just scared of it.

Not only should you be willing to talk about it but also you should talk about it in a way that challenges people. Now there is a fine line between a challenge and a scolding. But here is a tip. A challenge should motivate someone out of their own desire, and scolding motivates them out of fear. Big difference.

People want to be challenged to rise to the occasion. How can people accept a challenge if they don't even know what it is? It's the job of the pastor and church leaders to bring up the subject of money. Not as a heavy, obligatory focus, but as part of the everyday conversation.

**PEOPLE
HANDLE MONEY
EVERY DAY OF
THEIR LIVES,
SO WHY
WOULD YOU
ONLY TALK
ABOUT IT
TWICE A YEAR?**

MONEY TALK TIPS

- **GET MORE PEOPLE TALKING** - Have various leaders and donors share their experiences with money and why giving and generosity is such an important part of life and ministry.
- **MAKE IT PERSONAL** - Help people in the pews identify with the people talking by sharing personal anecdotes, challenges, and even failures surrounding the topic.
- **IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT MONEY** - Make sure to equate giving with serving, with sacrifice, and with worship. Remember, giving (and serving) is just an outward expression of an inner conviction.
- **PROVIDE RESOURCES** - Creating a culture is a two-way street. Helping people become generous means addressing the holistic issue. Give them resources about worship, personal finance, discipleship, and devotion. Generosity is borne of gratitude.
- **KEEP IT VARIED** - Don't just harp on giving, giving, giving; talk about the outcomes, talk about the challenges, offer thanks, celebrate wins, and acknowledge it in all its forms.

Consider the next 4 points...

One way to overcome the fear and loathing of talking about money is to remember that money is not the point; generous hearts are the goal. Generosity has value in this life and the next. As the Church, as disciple-makers, you are charged with developing the whole person. If you abdicate this important role in people's lives, you are doing a disservice to their development.

Talking about money is hard. Developing generosity is an eternal issue. Be bold and walk into the life-giving responsibility of nurturing people toward honoring God with generous hearts.

#2

MAKE IT CLEAR

Try as you might, no one will want to hear a word you're saying if you're not authentic and transparent.

It's simple. Err on the side of over-disclosure. If a publicly-traded company is required to share earning reports, a Body of believers should have enough information at their disposal to understand the financial need and challenges of the church.

Being transparent is not an obligation or burden of proof; it's an opportunity to develop discussion around money in a safe and engaging way that gets everyone involved.

You might be surprised. In many cases, we've found that donors have no idea what the needs of the church are, so they limit their giving. When people know the financial needs, opportunities, goals, and progress of the church, it's a starting point for fundraising, pledges, donations, and the like.

More than sharing the church books, being real about what you need and why you need it is a huge motivating factor for people to get involved. Simply knowing (for example) that we need \$15,000 per month for staff is not compelling, but knowing that we have people on staff who care for your kids, manage the facility, develop teaching and preaching materials, and perform pastoral care, and that they need our faithful support to do their important work, now that's compelling.

TIPS FOR TRANSPARENCY

- **DO IT WITH WISDOM** - Yes, be transparent, but don't bare your soul every week. People want you to be real, but not heavy all the time.
- **BE A FRIEND** - How would you communicate with your close friends? You're natural, you're honest, but there are still times when you consider what to share and what to hold, for their sake.
- **KEEP IT POSITIVE** - If you have negative news to share, provide hope by showing the way forward. Remember, with God all things - even overcoming financial obstacles - are possible. Don't hide the hard stuff, but don't dwell in defeat either.

Imagine you're a donor. What would you want to hear? Would you know when someone is hiding something from you? How does that make you feel?

**BE OPEN, BE HONEST, BE REAL.
YOUR PEOPLE CAN NOT ONLY
HANDLE IT, THEY'LL APPRECIATE IT
AND RESPOND.**

#3 TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INFORMATION

Reporting can sound boring to some, but it can hold the power to motivate more than you might think. When you provide people with information about their giving and how it ties into the bigger picture, it empowers them to engage in more meaningful ways on purpose.

There are two big ways you can provide information to motivate generosity.

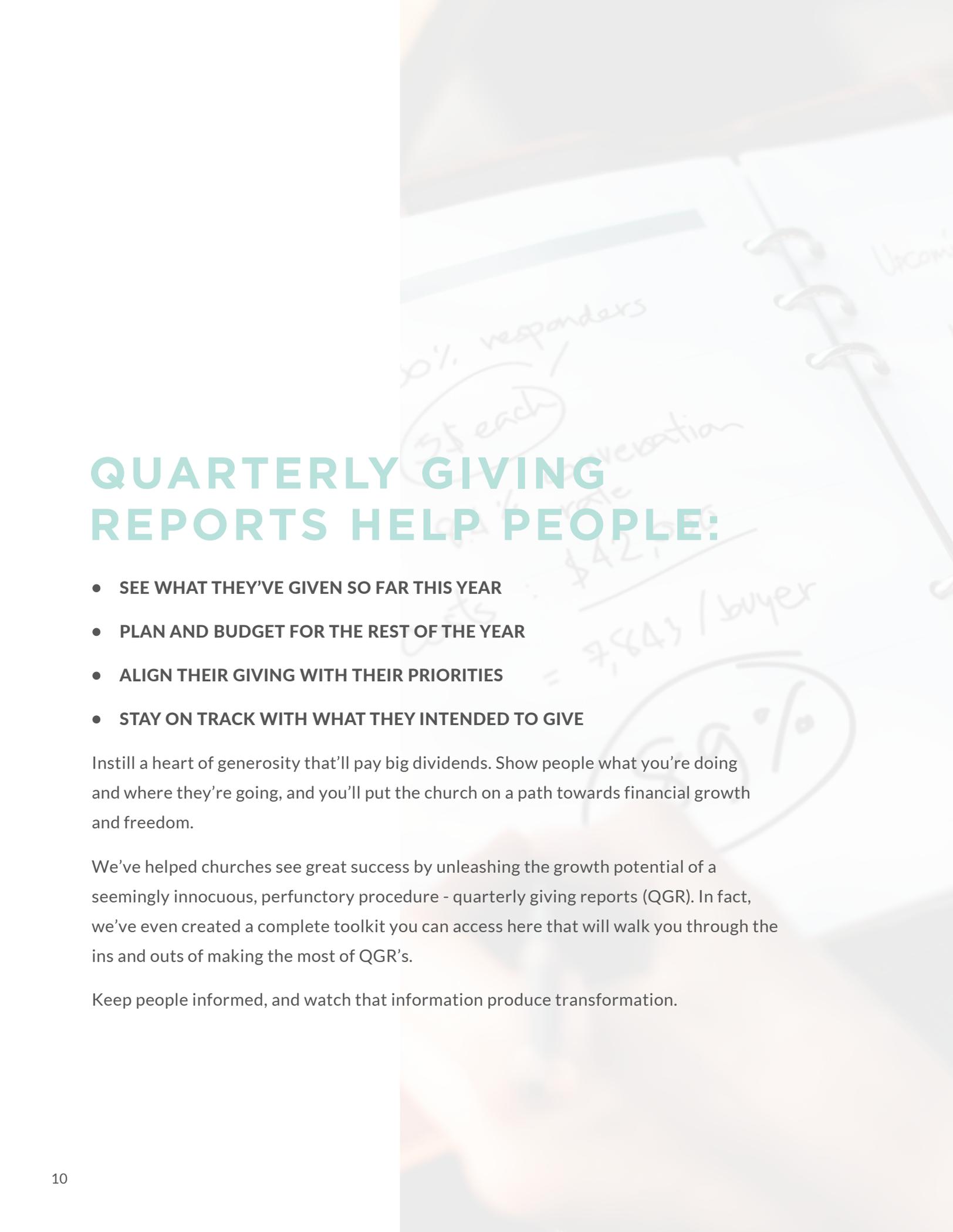
First, take some time in your weekend service to share the big picture of your church finances. Give people a (percentage or big picture) breakdown of your budget. Show where you stand on your monthly need, and talk about what kind of increase will be needed to meet the goal.

Second, provide your people with quarterly giving reports that show their giving history.

The truth is, most people think they are giving more than they actually are. Weekends get missed, unexpected expenses come up, and somewhere along the way, donations dissipate. Using quarterly individual giving reports, along with online and recurring donation tools, your people can stay on track with their financial commitments to your church.

**REPORT ON
THE PROGRESS
AND THE
POTENTIAL,
NOT THE PAST
AND THE
PITFALLS.**





QUARTERLY GIVING REPORTS HELP PEOPLE:

- SEE WHAT THEY'VE GIVEN SO FAR THIS YEAR
- PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR
- ALIGN THEIR GIVING WITH THEIR PRIORITIES
- STAY ON TRACK WITH WHAT THEY INTENDED TO GIVE

Instill a heart of generosity that'll pay big dividends. Show people what you're doing and where they're going, and you'll put the church on a path towards financial growth and freedom.

We've helped churches see great success by unleashing the growth potential of a seemingly innocuous, perfunctory procedure - quarterly giving reports (QGR). In fact, we've even created a complete toolkit you can access [here](#) that will walk you through the ins and outs of making the most of QGR's.

Keep people informed, and watch that information produce transformation.



EMPOWER PEOPLE

Get in the driver's seat, take the wheel in your hands, take control, own it - all clichés that insinuate the same thing: it feels good to be in charge of your own destiny.

Often people give sporadically with little awareness of their overall contributions and convenience. They find the most available way of giving when feeling compelled, and drop something in the bucket, online, text, whatever. This haphazard way of making and collecting donations does not inform, motivate, or cultivate a greater sense of engagement that leads to cultural reform.

On the flip side, when people can manage their giving preference, they can see patterns, make goals, and measure their contributions.

To get people more involved and engaged in their giving patterns, there are three big things you want to do.

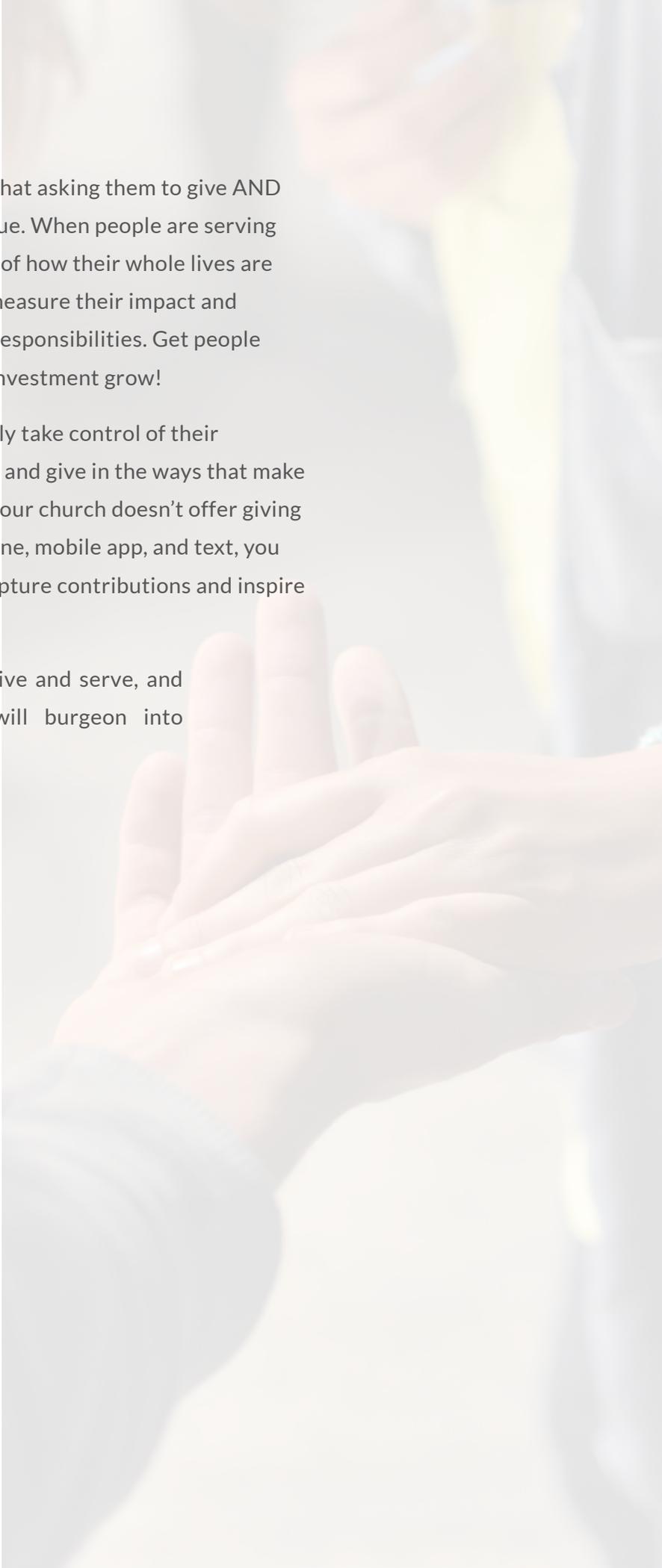
First, provide a place for them to log in (with mobile options) where they can control their giving. This could mean something as simple as viewing giving history or more involved like making and fulfilling pledges and managing recurring giving to multiple funds. The more people handle their giving, the more they will give because it becomes their responsibility to own their generosity, rather than just to respond to a request.

**PEOPLE PREFER TO BE IN
CONTROL OF THEIR PERSONAL
CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHURCH.**

Second, get them serving. What, you think that asking them to give AND serve is too tall an order? The opposite is true. When people are serving and giving, they see a bigger, better picture of how their whole lives are invested in your church. They can start to measure their impact and put faces to functions and relationships to responsibilities. Get people invested through serving, and watch their investment grow!

Finally, give them options. For people to truly take control of their contributions, they need to be able to serve and give in the ways that make sense for their preference and daily life. If your church doesn't offer giving options that include: cash, kiosk, check, online, mobile app, and text, you might be missing out on opportunities to capture contributions and inspire momentum.

Let people be involved in the ways they give and serve, and the strengthened sense of belonging will burgeon into abundance.



#5

PROMOTE THE NARRATIVE

If it starts with starting the conversation, it isn't finished until the narrative is pervasive. Meaning...

YOU MUST CONNECT THE DOTS FOR PEOPLE BETWEEN THEIR GIVING AND THE CHURCH'S IMPACT.

People should instinctively know that their contributions are moving ministry forward. For that to happen, they need to get specifics. They need word pictures, mental pictures, and actual pictures that help them visualize the gravity of their investment.

For example, if people are giving to a building fund, they need to know that X number of people made a decisions of faith under this roof. That X number of kids were baptized. That X homeless people were fed. And so on.

IF YOU DO ANYTHING WELL WITH MONEY, IT HAS TO BE TELLING THE STORY OF IMPACT.

After all, what's it all for anyway?

NARRATIVE IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL CULTURAL PHENOMENA IN HISTORY.

But to be the keeper and promoter of a healthy, honest, and accurate narrative, you'll need to:

- **TELL THE STORIES THAT MATTER** - Let people whose lives have been affected by the church, by a gift, by serving, by any contribution share their experience. Let people see how God made a change in someone else's life through their investment.
- **PROVIDE MEANINGFUL STATISTICS** - Instead of saying that you raised \$1,000 to feed the homeless, tell them you fed 100 homeless men, women, and children. Instead of saying you bought 200 new chairs, let them know you have room for 200 people to worship, learn, and make relationships that could lead to life change. Tell the story of statistics.
- **RECALIBRATE AND REPEAT** - Find new ways to say the same things. As the church evolves, as goals are met, as needs change, and as mission and vision crystalize, recalibrate your talking points, but stay on message. The message is that their generosity is making a real impact in the lives of their neighbors and in their city, country, and world. And that God is worshipped and honored through it. And that they are leaving a legacy. And that their lives, right now, are more full of joy and fulfilment because they decided to make a difference. And just kidding. That's enough, right?

When people see that their obedience and worship to God through giving is making a profound and tangible impact, their desire to be generous will soar to new heights. Tell the story, celebrate the wins, and keep cultivating culture through shared experiences.

One last thing...

A culture is ongoing. It takes work, so keep at it. It's not a campaign, an initiative, or a yearly goal. It's a way of life. If you don't live it, neither will your people. If you don't talk about it, nobody will. If you don't fight for it, it will fall by the wayside.

But it's worth it. When people live and engage in church life from their hearts and minds, instead of their habits and mandates, your church will reap huge benefits in the form of increased, ongoing, and bountiful resources provided from cheerful givers.

To successfully create a lasting culture of generosity, you need to keep a long-term view. Don't quit. Try to implement one new thing at a time, then keep building on what you've started. And if you need to, get a companion to keep you on track over the long haul.

a Culture Companion

Realm provides all the tools you need to keep people informed, connected, and engaged in a culture of generosity. Realm offers eGiving, text giving, campaign management, a mobile app, reporting, communication, community, and accounting; all in one. Create a culture of generosity, and power it with Realm.

We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by [watching a demo](#), walking through a [self-guided tour](#), or [speaking with an associate](#) today!



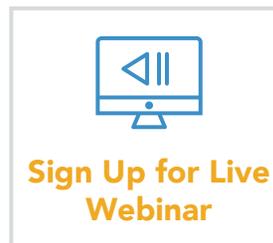
Throughout this guide, you have seen several ways that Realm helps churches reach new people and manage the life and operations of a church. We're excited to share more about our revolutionary ministry tool, Realm.

Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life way easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by taking a demo, walking through a self-guided tour, or speaking with an associate today!



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