

Best Practices from Healthy Churches for Recurring Giving

Why Recurring Giving Makes Sense:

- ✓ **The Data:** After surveying over 1000 churches, the number one thing in common between churches who consistently hit their budgets (14%) was an emphasis on digital recurring giving.
- ✓ **Increase Giving:** Recurring Givers donate 42% more annually, and when they make one-time gifts, those gifts tend to be larger.
- ✓ **Retention:** 80% of those who create a recurring gift are still typically giving one year later. And of those who keep giving, 95% tend to be giving 5 years later!
- ✓ **Engagement:** Recurring Givers are more engaged. They're much more enthusiastic about your ministry, much more likely to volunteer, and simply be involved.



Define an Owner:

A church needs someone to be the point person. Without a clear owner, particularly a senior leader, a recurring giving program is not going to get buy in. That person may not be responsible for 'doing' it all, but that person is responsible for the outcome.

As a leader, you must choose to own the outcome: Is what you're raising money for worth it? If you think it's worth the money, then it's worth it for you to own it. Because if you don't own the outcome, the outcome will own you.

Set a Goal (Timeframe, Amount, or % Increase, and Clearly Defined "Why"):

A date and clear goal create clarity and a sense of urgency. For example, "**Right Now X% of our total contributions are given digitally. By DATE, it will be Y%. Here's why it matters...**"

We've found its most effective to promote a recurring giving campaign over a short period of time rather than just sporadically throughout the year (though reminders are important). A 4-week campaign is a good rule of thumb. This can easily coincide with an existing fund-raising or stewardship campaign

- **You need it.**
Clarity will help you stay grounded in the present. It allows you to measure your progress. You will feel motivated to push harder because you have a solid understanding of where you are and how far you must go.

• Your church needs it.

Clarity gives the congregation perspective. And it drives them to make a decision because they feel a sense of urgency around a deadline. When you choose a date and percentage amount, the success rate of your campaign grows exponentially. On the other hand, when you leave it to chance – you settle for an unidentified dream and general goal—you limit yourself. People simply won't respond as much. Why? Because people want clarity. They want the target to be clear and concise.

Clearly Define your 'Why' and the Impact you expect (or existing impact of recurring donations):

Based on our own research, the number one thing a donor wants to know – across every age bracket – is the impact of their gift.

When church members ask why you want a 35% increase in digital giving in four weeks, you should be able to explain it. When an elder or deacon asks why you want 30 new families to set up recurring donations online, you need to tell them why. People respond to specifics.

[Watch this video](#) for tips on how to share the impact and the importance of doing so.

Ask for Recurring Giving (Reframe your Ask):

When you commit to prioritizing recurring giving, it's critical that you reframe the way you ask for gifts. In other words, you need to ask for monthly or weekly donations. Of all the tips we've shared, this is **perhaps the easiest and most effective**.

You see, while your congregation wants to support your church and see it grow, the reality is that most donors aren't going to wander in on their own and setup a recurring donation. They need to be asked, and usually more than once. If we only ask members to give a one-time donation, **then that is exactly what they will give**.

When you ask, make sure your donors know that they can update or modify their gift at any time. We've found that to be tremendously impactful.

When you ask, ask them to try it **for just three months**. People are more likely to try something new if they know they could bow out if it just not the right fit for them.

A great model we've learned is to [Setup Giving Tiers](#): Committing to recurring gifts right now can be intimidating for some people because of job uncertainty and economic concerns. One way to make people comfortable about recurring gifts is to create tiers to help them get started. Make the first gift on the tier approachable like \$5 once a month. The next tier could be \$10 a month, and so on. Don't forget to celebrate donors as they move up the tiers!

Show how easy it is to setup a recurring gift:

When you promote recurring giving, we've found it is **much more effective** to briefly share the exact steps to create a recurring gift - right during service time! Use a simple screenshare or pre-recorded video. (Need help? Use one of our [pre-created videos](#)!).

As a church leader, your members will follow your lead. When you give online in a recurring fashion and share about it from the front - so will they.

Don't forget to share these simple-to-follow directions on your website, via email, and all your communication channels. As food for thought - [see this example page](#).

Engage Your Older Donors:

Explain how easy and safe digital giving can be. Often, people have hang-ups about changing the way they give—especially if they've been using a familiar process for years. Scheduling time to sit down with long-time givers and walking them through the process of setting up an online giving account may seem a burden. Still, personal care goes a long way toward making the donor feel special and helping the church add more recurring givers to its software systems, significantly saving time when it comes to budgeting.

Ensure your website, bulletin, and offering announcements mention an option to help setup recurring giving on behalf of your donors. Here's some great verbiage for your website.

- **WE'RE HERE TO HELP!**
- **Do you need a little help setting up online giving? We are ready to assist you. All information is confidential and never written or recorded anywhere but our secure Giving Platform. Contact us at xx.**

Continue to Spread the Word (Be consistent).

While a 4-week campaign is effective, that doesn't mean promotion ends there. It should be on the list of giving solutions you share routinely with your congregation. Whether people are attending a service, watching your live stream, or listening to the recording on a church app, continue to spread the word about recurring gifts and cultivate consistent generosity.

Ex: every month or six weeks, make time a little extra time in your service to share the importance of giving, stories of how giving has made an impact (simple smart-phone videos are easy and well received!), and remind your donors about setting up a recurring gift. See our [7 pre-created giving scripts](#) as thought provokers to help you get started.

Regularly Say Thanks!

Did you know, study after study shows that if donors don't know the impact of their gift **or don't feel appreciated**, they're much less likely to give again? If we already know how important it is to thank a first-time giver, how much more important is it to **regularly thank regular givers**?

Consistent givers are the lifeblood of your ministry. Don't lean on the 'thank-you' in emailed donation receipts or a blanket thank you message from the pulpit. Personally celebrate your regular donors with how much they mean to your ministry!

Consider quarterly giving statements with how your members gifts are making an impact. Send hand-written thank you note to regular givers. Record a 1 minute thank you video and send it in an email (or text message). Did you know 90% of texts are read in 3 minutes? Get creative!

If you would like to learn more about Church Office Online or Giving, please contact us at (800) 220-2402 or [sign up for a free trial](#).