

## Building a Culture of Faithfulness and Partnership... in the Local Church

**Aim:** Help church leaders to understand the conditions for a culture of Faithfulness and Partnership to become a reality in the local church.

### Introduction

The Stewardship Ministries uses three common indicators to identify the Faithfulness and Partnership of members:

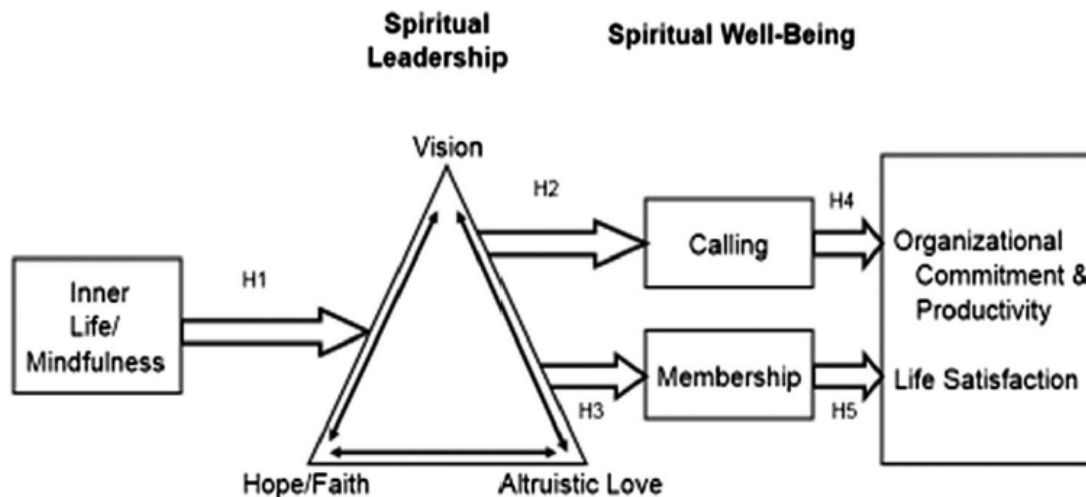
1. Members who are earning regular, seasonal or irregular incomes are returning \_\_\_\_\_ consistently.
2. Members are giving regular and systematic \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Baptized members are returning systematic offerings as a \_\_\_\_\_ of income.

The Church is a living organism, the body of Christ. As such, growth happens as the result of the right conditions being present. This presentation explores the conditions, in the local church, which are conducive for members to grow in faithfulness and partnership. There exist 3 decisive conditions: Spiritual Empowerment, Providing Stewardship Education to All, and Building Trust.

### Initiative I: Spiritual Empowerment

Members are nurtured spiritually by spiritual leaders, with a focus on the God-first principle, through home visitations, weekly offertory devotionals, regular stewardship sermons, annual commitment ceremonies, and other relevant activities. Our postulate is that members who experience spiritual growth in their personal lives are more likely to partner in God's mission.

### Fry's Model of Spiritual Leadership



Spiritual growth results from the practice of establishing and maintaining a daily \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

Apostle Paul explains the process of transformation to the believers in 2 Cor. 3:18.

\_\_\_\_\_ creates transformation.

Spiritual exercises such as regular prayer time, daily Bible study, study of the Sabbath School lesson, and attendance of church services are more likely to lead to faithful tithing (McIver, 2016).

Some initiatives, in the local church, can contribute to the spiritual growth of members:

- Encouraging members to have daily personal time with God.
- Encouraging members to study the Sabbath school lesson.
- Practicing home visitations
- Organizing the Annual Stewardship Emphasis Week.
- Helping members to have easy access to the book *Counsels on Stewardship*.

## **Initiative II: Providing Stewardship Education to All Segments of the Church**

All segments of the church membership, including prospective members, should receive adequate training in regular and systematic giving, in their responsibility of supporting the local and worldwide mission equitably, in management of personal finances, in means of creating and developing resources and other relevant topics, based on the Bible, Ellen G. White's book, *Counsels on Stewardship*, and her other writings.

The Bible favors development in all aspects of life, not only in the spiritual dimension, 3 John 1:2.

Ellen White describes an alarming situation that exist among believers:

“Many lack \_\_\_\_\_ and economy. They do not weigh matters well, and move cautiously... They generally think that they understand how to conduct their temporal business, and are unwilling to follow advice. They make bad moves and suffer in consequence.” (TC. Vol. 1 p. 224).

This situation affects the quality of life and the capacity for partnership of the believer.

Many do not remember the cause of God, and carelessly expend money in holiday amusements, in dress and folly, and when there is a call made for the advancement of the work in the home and foreign missions, they have nothing to give or even have \_\_\_\_\_ their account.

Thus they rob God in tithes and offerings, and through their selfish indulgence they lay the soul open to fierce temptations, and fall into the wiles of Satan.

*R. & H., Dec. 19, 1893.*

Some initiatives can bring growth in the area of personal financial management:

- Develop a pool of adequately trained stewardship financial educators to serve the local church.
- Provide seminars in the area of management of personal finances.
- Offer basic training to members who are willing to set up income-generating activities.

Should we be intentional in teaching stewardship? As a lifestyle, it is not fully caught through observations and interactions. Apostle Paul speaks about the importance of intentional teaching: Romans 10:14.

The Bible places a strong emphasis on intentional intergenerational teaching: Psalms 78:5,6

According to Mlvers (2014) \_\_\_\_\_ is a major reason why church members are not tithing regularly.<sup>1</sup> Frequent reminders could help change this situation.

### **Qualities of Good Stewardship Education Program for The Local Church**

Effective stewardship initiatives share some characteristics:

- Simple to implement.
- Not costly.
- Not taxing to the church's schedule.

The Recommended Strategy:

- Go \_\_\_\_\_ Encapsulate the stewardship message in already existing programs and initiatives of the Church.

Some initiatives to bring the stewardship message to all segments of the church using the “undercover” approach:

- Providing regular instructions and reminders to members about stewardship during Sabbath morning programs: Mission Stories or Videos during Sabbath School and Offertory Devotional Readings or Videos during divine service.
- Helping Adventurers and Pathfinders to earn the Wise Steward Award and Stewardship Honor respectively.
- Instruct prospective members about stewardship.
- Nurturing members in faithfulness during systematic home visitations.
- Preaching a stewardship-related sermon once every quarter in the local church.
- Using stewardship materials for evangelistic campaigns.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Tithing Practices Among Seventh-day Adventist*

## Key Stewardship Resources

Website: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/>

Magazine, *Dynamic Steward* (Quarterly) <https://stewardship.adventist.org/magazine-subscription>

Newsletter: God First (Monthly)

<https://stewardship.adventist.org/magazine-subscription>

Devotional Offertory Videos (Weekly)

<https://stewardship.adventist.org/2023-offertory-devotional-videos>

Stewardship Ministries Strategic Orientation Document

[https://stewardship.adventist.org/strategic-orientation-2020-2025-\(pdf\).pdf](https://stewardship.adventist.org/strategic-orientation-2020-2025-(pdf).pdf).

Recommended Book: *God Will Provide: Tithes, Offerings, and Our Spiritual Life*, Felix H. Cortez, Andrews University

## Initiative III: Building Trust

Stewardship leaders encourage and work together with the leadership of the church to establish an internal control system, comply with the Use of Tithes guidelines, assist in ensuring that regular financial information is provided to all members, and engage in other actions that contribute to building trust.

## Conclusion

The actions to build a culture of faithfulness and partnership happen at the local church level. Other levels of the Church organization act as facilitators. As multiple factors are involved, it cannot be the responsibility of one department. It is how we do church that will determine the level of faithfulness and partnership of a local congregation. Hence, it is advisable for the church board to coordinate the initiative of building a culture of faithfulness and partnership.

The Stewardship Ministries has still a significant role:

- It talks about the importance of a culture of liberality.
- It initiates actions to educate members
- It \_\_\_\_\_ with other church ministries.
- It acknowledges and encourages those who are already discipling members.

## Participants' Involvement

Complete individually, to your best knowledge, the Assessment Sheet below, for one local church that is familiar to you.

Discuss your findings with the other members of your group.

## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES ASSESSMENT MODEL TEMPLATE

**Name of Church:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Period Covered:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Goal Report

Average % of Tithers for the previous year: \_\_\_\_\_

Average % of Offering Givers for the previous year: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Increase in Average % of Tithers: \_\_\_\_\_ (default 2%)

Actual Increase in Average % of Tithers: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Increase in Average % of Offering Givers: \_\_\_\_\_ (default 2%)

Actual Increase in Average % of Offering Givers: \_\_\_\_\_

### Lead Measures Report

		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Spiritual Empowerment</b>						
i.	Offertory devotionals were presented during divine service.					
ii.	Mission stories were presented during Sabbath School					
iii.	Stewardship related sermons were preached at least once every 6 months.					
iv.	The book <i>Counsels on Stewardship</i> was accessible to members					
v.	The Stewardship Revival Week/Month was organized					
vi.	A Stewardship Ministries Day was organized					
vii.	The church had a systematic visitation program of church families.					
<b>Stewardship Education for All</b>						
viii.	Education about regular and systematic offering was provided during church programs.					
ix.	Education about distribution of local and worldwide church funds was provided during church programs.					
x.	Prospective church members were taught about stewardship principles during preparation for baptism.					
xii.	Adventurers and Pathfinders were assisted to complete respective award and honor in stewardship.					
xiii.	Family financial management training workshops were organized for members.					
<b>Building Confidence</b>						
xiv.	Several means of giving were accessible to members.					
xv.	The local church handled finances according to an approved internal control guideline.					
xvi.	The local church used an approved budget for transactions.					
xvii.	The local church complied with "Use of Tithe" document.					
xviii.	The financial audit report of the church was cleaned in all aspects.					
ix.	The local church prioritized evangelism in its expenses.					
x.	The local church had communicated regularly about church finances to the members.					

1. Disagree; 2. Almost Disagree; 3. Sometimes agree/Sometimes disagree; 4. Almost Agree; 5. Completely Agree.

## Tabulation of the Stewardship Ministries Assessment Sheet

Spiritual Empowerment = \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ %

Stewardship Education for All = \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ %

Building Confidence = \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ %

Overall = \_\_\_\_\_ / 100

### Interpretation of Overall Score

*The Stewardship Assessment sheet is not an empirically tested instrument. Nonetheless, it provides a good idea about the state of the three key conditions (Spiritual Empowerment, Stewardship Education for All, and Building Confidence) which are conducive to members' participation in congregational giving.*

**Read More:** *Stewardship Ministries Orientation Document*, <https://stewardship.adventist.org/strategic-orientation-2022-2025.pdf>

**Watch Video:** *Stewardship Ministries Orientation Document: A Pathway to Transform Reality*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj4D52fWnrI>