

Christian Stewardship vs. Secular Fundraising

Good stewardship raises money but does so in the context of broader and deeper concern about "giving" as a way of life and not simply a donation to a project.

Stewardship: Primarily concerned with the development of individuals and their place as members of the Body of Christ.

Fundraising: Primarily concerned with the organization meeting its financial obligations.

Stewardship: Seeks life-long change for individual.

Fundraising: Seeks to reach an immediate financial goal.

Stewardship: Concerned with the development of the individual.

Fundraising: Concerned with the financial commitment of the individual.

Stewardship: Based on respect for individuals and their place in the community of faith.

Fundraising: Based on estimation of the wealth of individuals and their social standing.

Stewardship: Promotes altruistic acts of compassion.

Fundraising: Promotes recognition for acts of contribution.

Stewardship: Invites everyone to be generous according to their ability.

Fundraising: Invites a select number of wealthy individuals to make pace-setting gifts.

Stewardship: Creates a plan based upon core beliefs and confession of faith.

Fundraising: Creates a marketing plan to persuade or manipulate people into giving money.

Stewardship: A calling to goodness emanating from a confession of faith and immersion in the church and its traditions.

Fundraising: A process of practices and conduct predicated upon a legalistic approach focused on the individual, culminating in a sense of donor choice or donor rights and what the donor is due.

Stewardship: Provides an opportunity for people to give witness to their faith in proportional means.

Fundraising: Provides an opportunity for people to self-identify their level of commitment, e.g. "sustaining member."

Stewardship: Concerned with retaining each and every member of the faith community.

Fundraising: Concerned about growing the database, even at the expense of some current donors.

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Stewardship: Believes that giving stems from people's commitment to their faith and community.

Fundraising: Believes that donations are the best way to build commitment from the database of donors.

Stewardship: Thematically promotes the idea that giving is a sign of praise and appreciation, responding to God with the generosity of God's own creation of which we are beneficiaries.

Fundraising: Thematically promotes the idea that people are the masters and possessors of their own wealth, and that a gift can promote their own standing.

Stewardship: Approaches individuals with the hope and promise of advancing religious values and spiritual growth, affirming the distinct role of the church as a way of life and not simply another worthy cause.

Fundraising: Tends to objectify individuals, treating them and any reluctance as problems to be "solved" in order to meet financial goals and organizational objectives.

Stewardship: Year-round and always, with special emphases during the church year.

Fundraising: Commonly time-specific, and related to the accomplishment of a specific task.

Adapted from *The Passionate Steward: Recovering Christian Stewardship from Secular Fundraising*, Michael O'Hurley-Pitts (Toronto: St. Brigid Press, 2001)