

## **Dealing with tough questions and negative attitudes**

**“If you’re going to bug me about Stewardship, I’m not going to give any money at all!”**

What is behind this kind of statement?

Honest statement

Person is resentful.

They contributed in some way, and did not receive a thank you.

They gave money in the past and felt it was not well-used.

They gave time or money in the past and it was not seen to be valued.

This is a threat/blackmail to get their way.

It is a way of saying, “I will give what I want. I am in charge of my giving.”

They are angry about something to do with the church from way back!

Someone is making trouble - “evil at work”.

It’s just a bad day for them.

They feel they are not “getting their money’s worth” now, so why give more?

They think they already give more than other folks in the church.

How to respond?

Don’t take it personally.

Thank them for their feedback. Ask, “Can you say more about that?”

Acknowledge what they said. E.g. So are you saying you want to decide what and how and when you give?” OR try to interpret the tone of voice. “You sound really annoyed with me.”

Possibly, “Well today we aren’t actually going to talk about money. We are going to talk about Stewardship of Creation, caring for God’s world”

Possibly share your understanding of why you give.

Other possibilities?

**“I am generous. Why should I give more? Why doesn’t the church cash in its investments?”**

What is behind this kind of statement?

The person thinks the church has money and they are not using it.

The church does not give evidence of trusting in God when they invest “for a rainy day.”

Investments are really gambling - making money off the stock market. The church is opposed to gambling so we should not have investments.

Cashing in the investments would relieve the burden of fund raising.

Why are they saving for a “rainy day”? Is it raining yet?

Church is dying anyway, so we should use up all our assets. It is time to cash in because death is near.

Cashing in investments may decrease the regular giving.

How to respond?

Don't take it personally.

If you know the reasoning of the Council for keeping investments, share it.

Discuss the question seriously with the asker.

If you do not know what investments your church has, or the reason for having them, tell the asker you will take the question to the Church Council for a response.

Have a serious discussion at Council about investments, about financial planning.

If investments are designated for a specific purpose, make this known.

Other possibilities?

### **Why does a poor parish have to send allotment to Halifax?**

What is behind this kind of statement?

The speaker thinks that allotment kills rural parishes.

No understanding of what allotment does, of how it supports mission.

People's priority seems to be "my building, my clergy, the diocese".

The primary interest is in local mission.

People think that the allotment given is used badly.

In multipoint parishes, there are 2 shares to be given outside the local congregation: a share to the parish, a share to the diocese.

The allotment formula penalizes increasing the giving, therefore people find endless ways to avoid the real income being counted.

Stipend + allotment = too much!

Resentment.

Allotment is seen as a "tax", a "collection", not an offering.

Fear of local church closure.

General resentment of sending anything "to Halifax"!

People feel no connection to the Synod Office.

How to respond?

Don't take it personally!

Have an educational piece ready that explains what the parish does with its money (narrative budget), and what the diocese does with the money that parishes send. ("Where does your money go?" (On the website)

Develop a way to explain that in Anglicanism a congregation is always part of a diocese. Having a Bishop costs money. Each parish offers some of its income to support the bishop. We are called to share with our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion and around the world. Each of our parishes offers some of its income to support those who have none.

Remind folks that the Allotment Task Force 2007 did determine that our system is a fair way to determine each parish's contribution. They also recommended a 1% decrease each year to reach 15% thereby reducing the total money each parish is asked to contribute. This was accepted by Diocesan Council Dec. 2007 and has been being implemented so that the Allotment rate has gone down from 22.5% to 19.25%. The speed of decreasing the allotment was checked when several parishes and regions reported that

losing things from the diocesan budget was costing parishes more money and not saving them money or work.

**I'm on a fixed income. You can't expect me to give very much.**

How to respond?

Aren't we lucky that we have fixed income like Canada Pension, Old Age Supplement, Seniors' Pharmacare, Employment Insurance, Disability Pensions (and other examples)? We can be very grateful to have these. In some parts of the Anglican Communion people have to work their whole life to have any income. Proportional Giving means setting a percentage (could be 1% up through 10%) of your income (whatever it is) and working in a disciplined way towards achieving that. Our gift represents our offering to God in thanksgiving for all that God has given us so it is a spiritual discipline that we undertake when we consider our offering to God's work through God's church.

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Companions on a Journey: A Stewardship Initiative of the Diocese of NS & PEI