

Not All Givers Are Alike and Why That Matters: How to Ask for a Gift

One mistake that many make is assuming all Christians think the same about giving. In the US, this is definitely true. We will learn from you how attitudes about giving might be different in the European context. Our case study will examine how we would approach asking for a gift and explore how that must be adapted in the European context. We will also explore how to engage volunteers in seeking funds for our ministries.

R. Mark Dillon is the Executive Vice President of the Christian Higher Education and Nonprofit division of Generis. He holds a PhD in Philanthropy and Leadership from The Union Institute in Cincinnati, a MDiv from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a BA from Bethel University. Dr. Dillon has been a successful Chief Development officer over 25 years, first at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School/Trinity College, then for 19 years at Wheaton College, and most recently at the American Bible Society. He authored the book *Giving and Getting in the Kingdom: A Field Guide*, considered to be a standard guide for fundraising in the Christian realm, and has consulted with numerous colleges, universities, and seminaries in North America as well as a number of churches and nonprofit ministries. Dr. Dillon and his wife, Susan, live in Chicago, IL, and are the proud parents of three children (Daniel, Joel, and Laura Grace) and grandparents to ten grandchildren.

Joel A. Dillon is the President & CEO of Jill's House, a nonprofit ministry dedicated to families raising children with intellectual disabilities. Joel is responsible for the overall operations of Jill's House, including overseeing the local and national fundraising for all five locations. Previously, he served as Associate VP of Development for Trinity International University in Deerfield, IL, where he played a role in some of the strongest years of giving in the university's history. His experience caring for "at-risk" children at Mercy Home for Boys & Girls in Chicago, IL and living alongside adults with intellectual disabilities in a L'Arche community in Germany has deepened his commitment and passion for the mission and work of Jill's House. Joel is a graduate of Wheaton College. He lives in the Washington, D.C. metro area with his wife, Hannah, and their two children, Lucy and Jonah.

I. Four Kinds of Givers

A. The reluctant giver

1. Usually not modeling of generous giving
2. "my money is my business"
3. Irritated to be asked

B. The casual giver

1. Some understanding of God's call on all of their life—including possessions
2. Tend to "tip" God

C. The thoughtful giver

1. Know God's call on their possessions.
2. Have experienced some joy in giving
3. Usually need to be asked
4. "If I'm not obedient to Christ in my giving, I am not fully following Christ."
5. "How much of God's money should I give?"

D. The gifted giver

1. Great joy in giving
2. Seldom need to be asked (they are collecting stories, not things)
3. "How much of God's money should I keep?"

II. How to ask well

A. Create capacity for fundraising

1. Determine to make it part of your responsibility
2. Determine how many relationships you can maintain

B. Come to terms with how to interact with people of wealth

1. They want authentic relationships
2. Being rich is not a reason to give
3. Being a donor is not that satisfying—being a financial partner is deeply satisfying

C. Plan, plan, plan

1. Who are you going to ask?
2. What are you going to ask for?
3. Should you ask permission to ask?
4. When?
5. How much?
6. Anticipate objections

D. Relate regularly and relationally

1. Always add value
2. Light, thoughtful touches are best
 - a. An article
 - b. A note
 - c. Do things together that they enjoy
3. Learn how they want to interact with you
4. Be an interesting person

E. The meeting

1. Be gracious and grateful—past giving and time
2. Listen way more than talk
3. Ask thoughtful questions
4. Be direct

F. When is the time to ask

1. Be confident
2. Brief recap of project and relationship to mission
3. Recap reason for the ask
 - a. The project needs significant gifts to flourish (gift table)

- b. You are one of few we know who may have capacity for a significant gift
 - c. Would you consider a gift of \$_____?
 - d. Fall silent until they respond
- 4. Answer questions/objections graciously
 - 5. Confirm their commitment or next step
 - 6. Always commit gift intentions to writing

G. Following up

- 1. Thank well
 - a. Promptly
 - b. In writing
 - c. With variety
 - d. Over time
- 2. Continue planning. What did you learn about
 - a. Capacity
 - b. Propensity
 - c. Level of generosity
 - d. What gives them joy in giving

H. Remember

- 1. If you don't ask, you rarely receive

2. You are not asking for yourself—you are asking for the sake of Christ's Kingdom
3. If you are in love with and give to the mission, you will be most effective
4. No one is offended by a winsome ask
5. God is a generous God, and we are most like God when we are giving
6. We usually get what we plan for

I. Let's Practice!