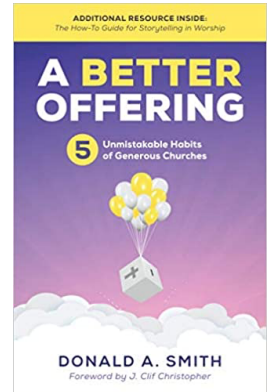


A Better Offering: Five Unmistakable Habits of Generous Churches, **Donald A. Smith, 2020**

“When will we be able to pass the plate again?” This was the lamentation when in-person worship came to a screeching halt in 2020. Donald A. Smith provides counterintuitive guidance on reassessing plate-passing during worship. What does this mean for you? **A better offering.**



Why I like the book:

- The message that making changes isn't just done so that the church can survive (have the money it needs) but so that it can more fully live into who God is calling it to be and the mission God is equipping it for in the world.
- Don is a pastor and a “former plate-passing advocate”, but he shares what changed his mind and the results
- 5 unmistakable habits of generous churches
- It was published in 2020 as the pandemic had already gotten underway, so it is relevant to today's environment
- Each chapter ends with “Conversation starters for your team” to help you facilitate dialogue

Points that really resonated with me:

- The history of passing an offering plate during worship versus how people brought their offerings according to scripture and that *offering* was originally intended to mean “the dedication of the whole self for the work of God”
- Even though church life has changed drastically, the biblical principles of stewardship have not. Smith explains how to incorporate those principles into a “virtual environment for generosity”.
- Jesus always had a story to tell. The offering can move from simply transactional (dropping money in the plate) to transformational if we incorporate story-telling and connect how gifts of money fund ministry that is impacting lives and being used for God's work in the world.
- Four pockets of giving: annual, capital, planned, and special. Each must be incorporated into the church's narrative and how it teaches people to live a holistically generous life as God's stewards.