

Topic 1: The Rise of Community-Based Fundraising Models in Faith Communities

Opening Thoughts

- Fundraising is no longer only the work of an event, a mailer, or of the staff member with the database.
- Community-based models empower *everyone* - board members, volunteers, alumni, small groups, and even program participants - to play a part in the invitation.
- This is a return to biblical fundraising: rooted in relationship, shared burden, and spiritual formation.
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"Fundraising is not something I do to someone. It is something I practice with someone - in friendship, trust, and hope." – Kevin Eastway - *Faithful Friendship*

Teaching Theme

When fundraising becomes community-driven, it forms a culture of shared mission. The fruit is deeper connection, broader reach, and lasting generosity.

Scripture Anchor

Philippians 1:3–6

³*I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Why It Matters Here:

These verses beautifully reframe the donor–fundraiser relationship from one of **transaction** to **partnership**. Paul does not thank the Philippians for *funding* the gospel - he thanks them for *participating in it* alongside him. This language honors supporters as *spiritual co-laborers*, not back-end benefactors.

Theological Insight:

- Partnership is not just financial - it's spiritual, emotional, and missional.
- Paul's "joyful prayers" show that **relational gratitude precedes organizational success**. Fundraising, in this frame, becomes a ministry of remembering, thanking, and praying.
- The word "koinonia" (fellowship/partnership) implies **mutuality**, not hierarchy. You don't invite donors to "support your work" - you invite them to *share in the work*.
- *How do we create community in fundraising? We invite others into the process of asking for money alongside of us!*

Key Takeaways

- Your mission is too important to rely on one person or one department.
- Community-based fundraising *builds ownership*, deepens commitment, and widens influence.
- Peer fundraising doesn't just raise money - it raises awareness, trust, and transformation.

Strategic Shift: From Centralized Fundraising to Community-Based Participation

Old Model:

- Centralized staff lead all fundraising activity
- Events and mailings drive revenue
- Board supports with oversight, not outreach
- Donor communications are largely one-directional
- Metrics focus on dollar amounts and donor retention

New Model:

- Fundraising becomes *everyone's ministry* - staff, board, volunteers, alumni, and friends
- Peer-to-peer giving and personal storytelling lead the way
- Board members are *trained* to invite others into the mission
- Donors become *ambassadors*, not just ATM cards
- Metrics also track relational momentum: new connectors, prayer partners, testimonies

Why This Shift Matters:

- It reflects a theology of *mutual plenty* (2 Cor. 8)
- People want to co-create the future of your organization – they just need the tools to do it!
- It increases sustainability by *decentralizing pressure* from staff and creating a culture of shared invitation – and helps them steward their sphere of influence as well

Practical Insights

- Build training and storytelling capacity among volunteers and board members.
- Teach board and volunteers this frame so that they see fundraising not as asking for money - but as *inviting others into koinonia*.
- Host “Ambassador Gatherings” where donors are invited to bring a friend and hear the story.
- Identify 5–10 people who could carry the invitation forward - and invest deeply in *their* spiritual and practical development.
- Equip board members with:
 - A clear “Why I’m Involved” script
 - Sample invitation templates

- Quarterly stories to share
- A pastoral understanding of fundraising as discipleship
- Map your relational ecosystem: supporters, alumni, church partners, and families - each has influence you can steward through trust, not pressure.

Workshop Discussion Questions

1. Where is your organization still relying too heavily on a centralized fundraising model?
2. Who are 3–5 people in your community you could begin *training and trusting* to carry the invitation?
3. How could you help your board shift from “supporting fundraising” to *practicing it* in faithful friendship?

Topic 2: The Role of Events in Donor Engagement

Opening Thoughts

- In a traditional model, events are often high-effort fundraisers focused on *output* (gala results, silent auctions, ticket sales).
- In a community-based model, events become *entry points* - on-ramps into shared vision, deeper formation, and mutual investment.
- Events don't have to be spectacles. They can be sacred: spaces where stories are planted, voices are affirmed, and callings are awakened.

"Events are not where generosity ends - they're where co-creation begins." – from *Faithful Friendship*

Teaching Theme

The best fundraising events don't just raise money - they raise up people. People who carry the mission, spread the story, and co-own the future.

Scripture Anchor

Romans 12:4–8

⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Why It Matters Here:

This passage grounds your **event and post-event strategy** in the reality that every person in the community has a role - and no one's role is secondary. Some give, some host, some follow up, some share testimony, and some offer prayer. Events flourish when *all gifts are activated*.

✦ Theological Insight:

- This passage reinforces the *relational and communal nature of generosity*. Events should be designed to **surface gifts**, not just solicit gifts.
- When donors see their voice, story, or presence as *part of the Body at work*, they move from consumer to co-builder.
- Jesus didn't just preach at tables - He *formed communities* around them.
- In Acts 2, gatherings became the lifeblood of the early Church - not for consumption, but for *commissioning*.
- Donors aren't just supporters - they are saints being equipped. Events become moments of discipleship and commissioning.

🔑 Key Takeaways

- Events are about *formation*, not just fundraising.
- They are communal moments where the mission becomes *relational, embodied, and belonging-based*.
- Every event is a discipleship opportunity: to invite, affirm, and release others into the shared work of generosity.
- Follow-up is not just about gratitude - it's about *invitation into inner work* and long-term partnership.

🔄 Strategic Evolution: From One-Time Events to Community Catalysts

Old Model:

- Annual gala or banquet with an ask
- Follow-up letter or email
- Staff or development lead handles all next steps

New Model:

- Intimate or creative events that *form community*
- Events as *platforms* for supporter storytelling
- Post-event process invites participants into deeper connection, prayer, and *shared responsibility*
- Supporters are asked not just to give - but to *give voice and carry vision*

🔧 Practical Insights

Designing the Event

- Equip and release donors not just to give - but to *use their gifts to spread the story* (e.g., peer invitations, small group hosts, thank-you card writers).
- Choose formats that invite presence: home gatherings, story circles, prayer nights, site tours, or campfire conversations.
- Embed storytelling: allow donors, alumni, and staff to share their “why.”
- Include spiritual grounding: a brief Scripture, a prayer of blessing, a moment of gratitude.

- Limit the "ask" - elevate the "invitation."

Shaping the Follow-Up

- Send a "What We Heard" reflection email with pictures, quotes, and themes from the gathering.
- Call or text each attendee with a personal note of thanks - ask what stuck with them.
- Offer next steps that invite *agency*, not just action:
 - "Would you be willing to host a gathering like this with 2-3 of your friends?"
 - "Could I equip you to tell your story and help us invite others in?"
 - "Would you be open to joining a new ambassador circle we're forming?"

Activating Voices & Ownership

- Provide supporters with:
 - Mission-aligned messaging they can share (sample emails, social posts, short talking points)
 - Stories of transformation they can pass along
 - Tools to create their own impact (peer-to-peer fundraisers, monthly giving campaigns, prayer guides)
- Commission your people: Invite them to *co-own the financial future* of the ministry with you - not as donors, but as *builders*.



Workshop Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of **spiritual formation** can you invite donors into after they attend an event?
2. What does it look like to train and trust people to **carry your mission forward after your event**, not just attend your it?



Closing Blessing

- May your events become wells, not stages. May those who gather drink deeply of the story - and leave knowing they, too, have a role to play in telling it forward.