

How well does your church manage God's resources?

Your Sunday morning service has just ended. The Church Treasurer takes the offering home and counts it, later deposits it, records contribution records, reconciles the bank statement, writes checks, and prepares a financial report for the church to approve at the next business meeting. Sound familiar? Unfortunately, many of our churches have very few financial controls in place. Financial controls can protect the Treasurer (or Financial Secretary) and the church. Below are some suggestions for financial control that every church should consider using:

- Separate the activities of counting, recording, and disbursing church funds. It is not wise for one person to perform all of these functions.
 - Establish clear guidelines for the handling of church funds.
 - Keep financial records in a secure area.
 - Conduct a financial audit annually. The audit may be external (performed by an outside Certified Public Accountant) or internal (reviewed by business people in the church who understand financial management).
 - Use caution when hiring personnel or enlisting those who have access to church funds.
 - Provide offering envelopes for member use.
 - Always have at least two people present when money is counted.
 - Deposit cash as soon as possible after it is received.
 - Have the counters verify that the amount written on the envelope was actually placed in the envelope.
 - Maintain current contribution records for members.
 - Use a requisition/purchase order system where expenses are approved before purchases are made.
 - Check all invoices for accuracy before payment is made.
 - Require two signatures on all church checks.
 - Separate the responsibilities of writing checks and bank account reconciliation.

The handling of church funds is an act of stewardship. Do what you can to see that God's resources are properly managed and cared for. Call Lee Wright or Jo Ellen Johnson, CPA, at 1-800-264-1225, if you have questions. An excellent printed resource for use by churches is: The Church Guide to Internal Controls, Richard J. Vargo, M.B.A., Ph.D, © 1995. Call Your Church Resources at 1-800-222-1840 to order (\$12.95 plus \$7.00 S & H).