

Servants Ministry
Servants Ministry Treasurer's Handbook
August 2006



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Preface

It is of utmost importance for you to know that the following handbook is not simply a “how to” manual, nor is it meant for you to rely on man’s wisdom to create a “picture perfect” ministry. We pray that this handbook will first and foremost prompt you to seek the Lord and His will in your life and your fellowship. This is a reference tool to give encouragement as well as insight and to be helpful about the little things so that we can better focus on the bigger, more important vision that God has placed before us.

This handbook is the first of its kind; it only begins to offer experiences from a portion of Servants’ Ministry. We hope it will be an ongoing project with expanding contributions and testimonies of His goodness for years to come. Lastly, we pray that this would point to Him *“who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to His power at work within us.”* (Eph. 3:20).

I. Vision of Servants Ministry

The body of Christ is still here on earth because the Kingdom harvest is still plentiful. Matthew 24:14 tells us that when the gospel is preached to the whole world, then the end will come. Accordingly, Servants Ministry exists

To reach our campus and to touch the world for Jesus Christ.

His great mandate for our life time is to win souls and make them into His disciples. The vision of Servants Ministry is three-fold:

SOUL-WINNING

First, we need to win more souls of this generation and the next one. Any nations and regions that live off only the past revivals become stagnant and decay quickly. We pray that God will use us to see more people become eternal sons and daughters of His.

DISCIPLE-MAKING

Second, we want to see more dedicated disciples of Christ. We hear and see of many crowds of Christians, but how many of them are willing to lay down their life or willing go overseas and into our inner-cities? May God raise more disciple-makers.



CAMPUS REVIVAL

Third, our focus of this Kingdom work involves campus ministry. Students make crucial life decisions during their college years -- major, vocation, life-goals, life-long friendship, etc. We desire to introduce Christ at the core of their life-decision process. Without Jesus, we end up with nothing. With Jesus, we have eternity.

FIVE SIGNS OF REVIVAL

We can discern that God is doing something real and enduring when these fruits are manifested amongst His people:

1. Changed holy life
2. Obedience to the Word
3. Passionate worship to God
4. Joyful & powerful service to God
5. Love for and reaching out to the lost

II. Living Set Apart

It is important to recognize that people, methods, technologies, and organizations themselves do not and cannot really change this world. Only God can bring about His lasting spiritual changes to this world -- and He does so through ordinary people who are willing and available. Campus ministry is a training ground in which to fulfill the call of God as we engage in learning, developing our God-given gifts, and growing through various experiences. Will you say "Yes" to His call this day?

"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect."

II Samuel 22:31-33

What sets us apart from the rest of the world? Lately, many non-believers have been known to do good things by giving away their millions to the poor. Are we falling into the trap of busying our lives with things that appear to be right or good? The passage above tells us that if we will make God our refuge and live in utter dependence on Him rather than upon ourselves, we will be living the perfect way our Father has set before us. Will we actively believe Him and make Him our Rock, so that we can take part in ushering in His Glory?



Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction 3**
 - 1.1 Purpose of the Document 3
 - 1.2 Targeted Audience 3
- 2 Spiritual Matters..... 3**
 - 2.1 Praying for Money 3
- 3 The Role of the Treasurer 3**
 - 3.1 Purpose of Position 3
 - 3.2 How Do You Fit Into the Leadership Team?..... 3
 - 3.3 Typical Roles 4
- 4 Methods and Tips..... 4**
 - 4.1 Being a Good Steward 4
 - 4.2 Avoiding Shady Business..... 5
 - 4.3 Reimbursements 7
 - 4.4 Budget Formulation..... 7
 - 4.5 Retreat Payment and Scholarships 8
 - 4.6 Why Can't We Be Friends? – Reconciling [the Ledger]..... 9
 - 4.7 The Financial Presentation 10
 - 4.8 “Yay I’m Done! Oh Wait, No...” – Training Your Successor 10
 - 4.9 ‘N-O spells... Yes?’ 11
 - 4.10 When the Job Isn’t So Much Fun – Avoiding Burnout 12
 - 4.11 The Most Important Second Most Important Fairly Important Part..... 12

Appendices

- A Budget Tracking Sheet 13**
- B Deposits Record Sheet 14**
- C Ledger..... 15**
- D Harvest Presentation 16**



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

Multiple fellowships in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC make up Servants Ministry. Each fellowship has a different size, style of leadership, and general methods of practice. This handbook is designed to establish a general standard procedure for handling financial matters and give you some practical tips to help you do your duties easily and efficiently.

1.2 Targeted Audience

Treasurers within Servants Ministry.

2 Spiritual Matters

2.1 Praying for Money

'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.'

Matthew 7:7 – 8

Money is a quasi-backbone to many of your fellowship's operations. Without money, it becomes a little difficult to get necessary supplies, run programs, or hold retreats. Please pray for your fellowship's finances. Honestly. Who else is going to? When was the last time someone said "Let's pray for the finances!" at prayer meeting? Some possible topics to get you started:

- Wisdom to make wise decisions in using the resources God has provided your fellowship
- Thanksgiving for God's past faithfulness, and for His promises to continue to provide for your fellowship's needs
- Blessings over activities your fellowship plans, so that it would not just another event for people to attend, but would be used to further Christ's kingdom

3 The Role of the Treasurer

3.1 Purpose of Position

Your role as fellowship treasurer is to handle all financial transactions and keep accurate financial records of all fellowship activities. Sounds easy enough, right?

3.2 How Do You Fit Into the Leadership Team?

Your position is generally supportive in nature. In many cases, you may play a supportive role rather than decision maker or a management role. You, your staff worker, and fellow exec team



members will have final authorization over all matters related to the fellowship's finances. Some of you may be making the financial decisions with backup from the exec team and staff. For others, the exec team will make financial decisions by consensus and defer to you for approval. This depends on your individual fellowship and your exec team leadership style.

In either case, it is extremely important for you to make guidelines clear at the beginning of the year to your fellowship regarding such things as: ministry team/small group/event budgets, reimbursement procedures, and examples of acceptable and unacceptable purchases. Setting the rules at the beginning of the year will help you avoid any issues later in the school year.

3.3 Typical Roles

While this may differ depending on your fellowship, typical roles include:

- Deposit all inputs into the fellowship account
- Handle all reimbursements in a prompt manner
- Keep all receipts and bank statements to file away
- Compare bank statement to checkbook and reconcile the ledger
- Create ministry team and program budgets and track to ensure compliance
- Keep track of fellowship ledger and file back-up copies
- Pay any fellowship related bills
- Send receipt letter to donors of their yearly givings record – this is generally done in December to follow the calendar year (Usually give to outside contributors such as alumni and to grad students, unless an undergrad student requests a letter)
- Prepare fellowship's financial overview for Harvest Retreat
- Go over ledger with staff member each semester to audit ledger
- Support additional task as required by exec team/fellowship
- Assist missions team treasurer, if applicable (For example, Camden/other spring break mission trip, fellowship sponsored summer mission trip)
- Train incoming treasurer

4 Methods and Tips

4.1 Being a Good Steward

Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them

Tom Stoppard



'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'

Luke 12:48b



Congratulations! Someone, or multiple someones, think you are responsible enough to be in charge of the fellowship's finances. Money can be a very testy subject. You should not take this responsibility lightly.

You are the main designee to write outgoing checks and process inputs. Should there be any discrepancies or errors, you are responsible to make the necessary corrections. Therefore, it is imperative that you keep accurate, timely records.

Please do not procrastinate on your duties. I know, I know. You are probably busy watching American Idol or playing Super Smash Brothers or sleeping or eating or maybe even studying. Yet, there are no excuses to fall behind in taking care of the fellowship's finances, aka  **GOD'S MONEY** . Does that get your attention?

There will be times throughout the year when you are swamped with multiple duties flying at you in all directions. Set aside a fixed time every week to work on necessary treasurer duties where you will not be interrupted with other matters. You may be tempted to put things off until later. Be very careful that you do not let things pile up, especially **any bills that need to be paid**. Fiscal responsibility begins with you.

You should always have another person designated to have check-writing power. This can be the former treasurer, another member of the leadership team, or someone else within your fellowship. While this person should not normally be writing checks, you should have a backup in the event that you are unavailable to write reimbursements, such as during summer break.

Before finals week each semester, announce the last date you will accept receipts for the semester – that is, unless you want to be doing reimbursements while trying to study for finals. You should also try to avoid making reimbursements for extremely old receipts. Keeping receipts to the respective semester will make things easier for you, and help keep things in order during the transition period between treasurers.

Some fellowships operate with a low cash fund. Make sure that you stay up-to-date on the fellowship's status of funds so you do not overdraw or go under a minimum daily balance. This is where signing up for online banking may be to your advantage. Online banking is usually free to set up, but check with your bank concerning any minimum balance or monthly fees that may apply before signing up. Online banking will give you immediate access to track the current status of funds, as well as easy access to previous prior account activity. It can also assist you in reconciling the ledger to the bank statement balance.

4.2 ***Avoiding Shady Business***

Main entry: *Suminspicious*.

Pronunciation: /sə'mspɪʃəs



Noun/Adj. An activity that is suspicious in nature, a dubious activity or describing said dubious activity.

'Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God'

1 Corinthians 10:32

As a Christian fellowship, chances are that your fellowship members are honest, decent folk. However, you still need to set up and maintain certain controls so that *suminspicious* activities do not occur. In doing so, you will protect the integrity of your reputation, as well as your fellowship's reputation.

As the treasurer, try to avoid making purchases as much as possible. While this is not always feasible, you should not be writing reimbursements to yourself on a regular basis. This is definitely *suminspicious*. Have someone else make purchases when possible. As an added bonus, this will also protect your personal bank account from being used as the fellowship piggy bank. You can leave that to some other ~~sucka!~~ person.

Try to also avoid prepaying for purchases if possible, unless it is to a legitimate business entity (rather than to an individual).



Avoid handing out blank checks if you are able to do so.



This can be a complicated situation, as you will not have direct control over the amount purchased. This can also easily become *suminspicious*. By implementing a no-writing-blank-checks or writing-as-few-blank-checks-as-possible policy, you avoid the situation of having to determine who is trustworthy enough to receive a blank check and who is not. This is for your benefit (no *suminspicious* activity under your watch), your fellowship's benefit, and the purchaser's benefit (no potentially tempting situation). There may be times where this is not feasible if a purchase is large, an individual's personal bank account cannot take such a large withdrawal, or you will be unavailable to write immediate reimbursements.

There is also the mentality that if you are spending someone else's money, you can spend more or be less concerned about the cost, while if money is coming out of your personal bank account, you will think more carefully about purchases that will be first withdrawn from your bank account. While this doesn't work for everyone, it seems to make people think more carefully about the purchases they are making. This is a win-win situation for everyone.

From time to time, someone may bring up the possibility of issuing a fellowship debit card. This has been frowned upon by Servants Ministry in the past, as it opens up new situations for possible overspending or *suminspicious* activities to occur, as well as making recordkeeping more difficult for you. Should there be a concrete, legitimate need for one, you should consult your exec team and Servants Ministry staff to discuss possible solutions.



4.3 Reimbursements

'The most rewarding part was when he gave me my money.'

Dr. Nick Riviera

To some, making reimbursements may be the single most important job you will perform. One of the perks of this position is exponentially increased popularity. Suddenly, everyone will want a piece of you.

Keep detailed records of everything. Each outflow (ie. check written out) should be accompanied by the appropriate documentation (ie. the receipt), and each inflow (ie. deposit) should be accompanied by the appropriate deposit slip. When you receive receipts for reimbursement, you should write the date reimbursed, person reimbursed, amount, check number, and program category on the receipt/s. For deposit slips, you should write the date deposited and the category of the deposit. This will help you should any discrepancies occur.

Multiple related receipts may be grouped together in one check; reimbursements should be separated if program categories differ when possible. For example, you should split a reimbursement into two checks if the individual has purchased small group and large group related items in one batch of receipts. Obviously, this will not work for credit card expenses. List the breakdown of credit card payments and multiple-reimbursement receipts in the ledger.

If the person requiring reimbursement has lost the accompanying receipt, have them write the vendor, item, and total cost on the piece of paper and sign it. You can use this as a receipt file copy. This way, you will always be able to track any reimbursement to documentation. Keeping detailed records will assist you in tracking and correcting any errors that may occur.

Try to do reimbursements in a timely manner. This way, you will be less likely to forget someone's reimbursement or lose a receipt, and the reimbursee will not be constantly asking you for money.

4.4 Budget Formulation

This task is very simple if there is already a budget in place. Simply start off with whatever is in place and make adjustments as necessary. Hopefully, the previous treasurer left you notes on what the budgets were, and how the budgets were formulated. Things are a bit trickier if there is not some type of control already in place, and if you haven't done it before.

Ministry Team Budget

There are several approaches to creating a budget for ministry teams. For each team, create an outline of specific events throughout the year that the ministry team is responsible for planning and execution, and any costs associated with the event. You can assign a year or a semester



budget for each ministry team, and/or event budget for specific events. For example, you may allocate XX dollars to the outreach team for the semester, with a specific portion of that amount to use during Passion Week. If information is available on what the ministry teams had spent in previous semesters, you can use that as a starting point to figure out a plan.

Small Group Budget

Since small groups participate in different events in different semesters, it may be helpful to establish a semesterly budget. To make things easier for you, you may opt to adopt a no-carryover-fund policy between semesters.

The purpose of the small group funds is to give small group leaders some resources to help facilitate small group bonding and growth. Some typical expenses that you may suggest to small group leaders:

- Bible study snacks
- Outreach dinner ingredients
- Bible study t-shirts
- Care packages for exams
- Bible study books and other study materials

You should also make it clear what is not allowed use of small group funds. Most of these should be obvious to everyone, but just to be clear:

- Items purchased for personal use
- Gifts targeted for exclusively for one person (ie. birthday presents)
- Used to offset an expensive dinner (You must decide where to draw the line on this one. Even if the meal is for a Bible study meal, the funds should not be used simply to take the small group out to eat.)

You may also want to remind small group leaders that they can always use their own money, or ask small group members to contribute to a group activities fund.

You will determine whether or not an expense is valid. If you deem an expense to be invalid for reimbursement and receive an objection, the final decision should be made by the exec team and staff worker.

For especially large small groups, small group leaders can request additional funding. This should be worked out with the small group leader, exec team, and your staff worker.

4.5 *Retreat Payment and Scholarships*

Typically, 'retreats' is one of the largest cost categories for your fellowship. There should be a pre-established price guide for retreats based on previous retreats for your use. Of course, the price guide will change if the cost of the retreat center increases. Generally, you want to aim for breaking even based on the retreat center cost, or retreat center cost plus speaker honorarium. This is at the discretion of you and the exec team members, and how much your fellowship can contribute to offset the total cost of the retreat.



While most students should be able to cover the cost of the retreat, there are students who are not as well off financially as others. This is where retreat scholarships come in. Make sure to announce that scholarships are available when the retreat is initially announced. Depending on the individual and the individual's situation, you may opt to ask them to pay 3/4, 1/2, 1/4, or none of the retreat fee. Preferably have the person contribute a part of the fee so that they will have a financial incentive to participate and get 'their money's worth.'

Get approval from your staff worker before making any arrangements. This is typically not something you need to discuss in detail with the exec team. And of course, please respect the person's privacy by not readily dispersing who receives a scholarship.

4.6 Why Can't We Be Friends? – Reconciling [the Ledger]

While important, most fellowships have not performed reconciliations of the ledger to the bank statement to make sure that these match. Due to errors in entering data, automatic debits withdrawn from the bank account, or other errors made during the position transfer period, the ledger balance often does not match the bank statement balance. This may become a problem if you operate with a low cash flow and are uncertain of the actual balance. You should do a reconciliation every month to ensure that your ledger is accurate. It is much easier to verify transactions from a month rather than a semester of activity! This will also expedite any auditing that needs to be done, as you can show dates where the amounts are consistent.

At the end of each month, you should obtain the monthly bank statement. You should be able to access the current bank statement online, as well as past bank statements, once you register for online banking. The bank statement lists all transactions that occurred in the fellowship account during the month. If someone with a reimbursement check has not yet cashed the check you wrote to them, this will make the bank statement balance larger than the ledger balance. The bank statement will also be your source for entering any banking fees or direct debits from the account into the ledger, as well as alert you to any errors that may have taken place.

Here are some basic steps to reconciling the ledger and the bank statement:

- Enter the date each check is cashed in the ledger. Flag any checks that are still outstanding at the end of the month.
- Enter any direct debits or bank fees into the ledger. Check to make sure that the check and deposit amounts line up.
- Compare the month end bank statement balance to the last ledger entry of the month. If they match, congratulations! You have no outstanding checks to track for next month.
- If there is a difference between the ledger and the bank statement, add any outstanding checks to the last ledger entry balance. Does this amount match the amount on the bank statement?



4.7 *The Financial Presentation*

Very few people stop to think about where the money your fellowship uses comes from or where it goes, and in all likelihood, very few people probably care. Regardless, your fellowship has a right to know, and as the treasurer, you have the obligation to let them know.

This is where the financial presentation is important; it may be the only time you can explain how money plays a role within your fellowship. If your fellowship holds a planning meeting prior to the spring semester, this is a good time to present the fall semester finances. While the preparation may seem a little complicated, if you have been keeping good records, it should be very simple to prepare.

For the presentation, you should prepare the following (and anything else you feel is appropriate):

- Semester (and yearly, if available) cash inflows and outflows – The normal inflows and normal outflows tend to differ each semester as you run different programs in different semesters. If you have the information, an overview of how and why semester income/expenses differ is helpful in explaining the cost of different programs.
- An easy-to-read pie chart works well to show the inflows and outflows of a certain program or ministry team. A percent of cash inflow/outflow can often help people see where the funds comes from/goes more easily than the amount in dollars.
- What is the source of your income? – Most of your fellowships do not hold Sunday Chapel, and so do not have a weekly tithe. Where does the money come from? Do you have a strong base of alumni who contribute regularly to your fellowship? Do you sell wrapping paper or candy or Girl Scout cookies? Many people assume that the fellowship is financially solid, when that may not necessarily be the case.
- Semester highlights – Note any significantly large expense groups and other items that may be worth bringing up. As an example, many people do not understand why retreats cost money, or why there is a retreat cost at all. This is your opportunity to let your fellowship know the costs associated with running a retreat. Though retreat costs often seem high, in almost all cases, retreat expenses greatly exceed the retreat income (the registration fee).
- Small group and ministry team budgets and budget guidelines – You should remind small group leaders of their remaining balance mid-semester.
- Does your fellowship make any outside contributions to organizations such as WorldVision or Compassion International, or support missionaries? This information is important to mention.

4.8 *“Yay I’m Done! Oh Wait, No...” – Training Your Successor*

Please train the new treasurer once your term is complete. While this may, and **should**, be obvious, there have been some instances where the old exec team left the new exec team to figure everything out on their own. In the spirit of aiding your fellowship run smoothly, as well as being nice, this behavior is unacceptable. And it’s kind of messed up to not help your new exec team out. While your successor will likely be able to figure most things out within a few weeks on



their own, training will help your new treasurer learn the position much more easily. This will also help avoid a situation where records are not maintained, or maintained incorrectly. Doing things correctly the first time requires fewer resources than having to fix mistakes later on.

Training is as simple as sitting down with your successor, going over details of the position, and explaining the ledger. You may choose to do a preliminary audit of their work in the middle of the new treasurer's first semester to make sure that things are being recorded properly, and aid them as you see fit. You may make a new friend through the process as an added bonus! (assuming you don't know the person beforehand)

The transition period is not the time for you to dump whatever work you didn't have time to do on the new person and avoid your responsibilities, nor is it the time to throw everything in their general direction and run away. Your job as the treasurer is not complete after you write your last reimbursement and transfer check writing power (even if you sometimes wish that to be the case).

This also means providing all the materials they will need, including your term's data. This is likely the only position where your successor needs to follow your format, unless he or she is able to make improvements to the process. Explaining tasks and providing all the necessary files will make the transition much smoother.

Items you should provide in the transition:

- Completed ledger for the semester/year
- Copy of donor receipt letter
- Copy of donor collection sheet
- Copy of budget guidelines and budget tracking sheet
- Copy of the Harvest financial presentation
- Copy of this handbook 😊

4.9 'N-O spells... Yes?'

While you may not have much flexibility over tasks that are specifically assigned to you as a treasurer, be careful about agreeing to take on extra tasks. You have a position in your fellowship that requires your specific attention, and in most cases requires you to do tasks that no one else should be doing. Do not feel bad turning down tasks outside of your position.

Often, there are others in your fellowship are willing (even eager) to help out and serve. You just need to provide them with the appropriate venue or specific assignment to perform and then ask for help. Delegate tasks where you can to give others a chance to serve and contribute to the fellowship, improve their serving abilities, and as give you some relief. This is an excellent way to give others the chance to discover and develop their spiritual gifts. Just don't delegate what you shouldn't be delegating.



4.10 When the Job Isn't So Much Fun – Avoiding Burnout

'So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'

Luke 17:10

'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'

Colossians 3:17

Sometimes, there is some grunt work involved in this position. Maybe a lot of grunt work. This position is unique in respect to other positions, as you cannot delegate many tasks to others without getting into *suminspicious* territory. Reconciling the ledger isn't really anyone's idea of a good time. You will be doing things by yourself for a majority of your duties.

Along with the Secretary position, you carry the burden of the invisible position. Many tasks you do are thankless and will go unnoticed, although this also applies to any other position you may take. Remember why you are doing these sometimes not-so-fun tasks. Several of you probably hold multiple positions within your fellowship. Be careful you don't get burnt out from all of your duties, because being burnt out is not very fun. Keeping on top of tasks and not letting things pile up is a good way to avoid burning out.

Before you attempt to plan or do anything, make sure your relationship is right with God. You may notice that you have more energy and more enthusiasm for duties when you have recently spent time with God. Remember where your source of your strength originates! In the midst of classes and homework and exams and serving craziness, remember the stream of living water that never runs dry, and always refreshes.

4.11 ~~The Most Important~~ ~~Second Most Important~~ Fairly Important Part

Have fun. ☺