

The Invitation to Increase (Increase Ask)

Table of Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Elements of the Invitation to Increase](#)
- [Practical Steps](#)
- [Testimonials](#)
- [Scripts](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)
 - [Suggestions for this page?](#)

Introduction

Let's say you're running a business that has shareholders who regularly invest in your company. In order for your company to scale and grow, you need them to increase their investments over time. If this is the case, what should be your next move? How could you plan this to be a regular conversation so you not only retain but increase investments?

This is the same wisdom we use for MTD when we invite our partners to increase! In gardening/ farming terms, we look at the crops we already have in order to discover how to increase their yield. We don't go out and plant more crops if we aren't weeding, fertilizing, watering, and pruning the crops we already have. And we certainly don't leave fruit on the vine come harvest time! The Biblical wisdom for this can be seen in Prov 20:4 and The Parable of the Talents.

So, before you go out to plant new crops, let's work on increasing the yield in the field God has already given you.

Because careers change, salaries flux, investments grow, and giving capacity changes, *we regularly* engage our donors in opportunities to lift (increase) their giving. That supporter who came on your team as a new college grad likely has a different income ten years into her career. If you've never engaged her in an opportunity to increase her impact, it's likely something she hasn't considered, even though she has the capacity. Encouraging your ministry partners to seek the Lord on the level of engagement He is asking them to lean into this year yields a more robust support team and a deeper connection with them.

Elements of the Invitation to Increase

How does inviting a supporter to increase honor them?

In the [Practical Steps](#) section of this page, you'll find instructions on calculating an Intentional Gift Amount. This is based on the number of supporters you feel you can wrap your arms around and stay connected with over the course of a year. Why think through this? Because when it comes time for the cultivation of your MTD partnerships, you can have a quick touch-base with 150 partners or a meaningful connection with 50 partners. It's for you to decide. Do you want a team of ministry *donors* or ministry *partners*? There's a big difference, and it will impact every aspect of how you do MTD.

If you're desiring partnership, consider; "What makes someone a true *partner* in ministry? And how do I honor that relationship?" Writing your prayer letter in a partner-centered way, showing them how *they're* making an impact, is a start! Other things to consider: Asking for their advice, inviting them to volunteer, giving them opportunities to speak into your life, sending short prayer texts, investing in their life as a spiritual friend - a place in which they can find a meaningful connection that points them to Jesus (this need can be especially high among some of our [higher-capacity](#) partners).

Yes, this will require some extra work on the front end. But, it will also mean less time on the back end, having to find new donors.

Start small, with the **vision to build up to this ideal over a number of years**. The [Practical Steps](#) section will encourage you to start with a list of 20 people. **Ask the Lord to show you what 20 partners He wants you to invest in and go deeper with this year.**

Because careers change, salaries flux, investments grow, and giving capacity changes, *we regularly* engage our donors in opportunities to lift (increase) their giving. That supporter who came on your team as a new college grad likely has a different income ten years into her career. If you've never engaged her in an increase ask, it's likely something she hasn't considered, even though she has the capacity. Encouraging your ministry partners to seek the Lord on the level of engagement He is asking them to lean into this year yields a more robust support team and a deeper connection with them.

Just like our corporate investors' example, it's normal to make a habit of [regularly](#) connecting with your supporters about their Kingdom investment. Using "it's that time of the year..." or "it's the season to..." language sets the table for this to be a normal conversation that's expected to also happen again in the future.

"It's that time of the year when we get to connect and talk about your giving and the impact it has made. I also want to pray over you and seek the Lord together on how He might have you deepen your impact. (ministry update & personal conversation. Increase ask, if led) ...How about you seek the Lord over the next 24 hours about this, and I'll pray over you during that time as well? We'll reconnect tomorrow around the same time and see what the Lord brought up. Sound ok?"

For more, see [Sarah B's story](#) below.

As your commitment to ministry increases (through a change in your role, an increase in responsibility, or even a deepened resolve to reach the unreached), invite your partners to increase their impact. Some have put it this way, "As my commitment to minister has deepened, it makes sense to invite you, my partner in ministry, to deepen your commitment as well by increasing your ministry impact."

As your current team increases their investment, your ability to invest more deeply into them increases as well, vs spreading yourself thin among a lot of people.

About 1% of those you ask to increase will reveal they need to decrease or end their engagement. That's normal and still something to rejoice over! Take the time to honor and celebrate your supporter for the work they've done in partnership with you. Share a few stories of people *they've impacted* with the Gospel *because of their giving*. And let them know how much you've appreciated their faithfulness to the work. Then give them an opportunity to connect you with one or two others who might be passionate about this ministry work.

Don't be surprised by this attrition! Bless them and release them. It's part of the pruning process, and it leads to a more vibrant and healthy team.

When reaching out, don't be shy about letting your supporters know you'll be talking about giving. Don't beat around the bush and pretend this is just a friendly catch-up call. If you're feeling some guilt because you haven't done a great job keeping in touch with your supporters, either take some time to re-establish that connection before you invite them to consider an increase or come out and own it during the call. (See [Matt's story](#) below)

The invitation to increase is the beginning of a deeper, more honoring connection with those who have decided to lock arms with you through financially supporting your ministry. Plan to thank those who deepen their investment. A few months later, reach out personally with a story of how *their* giving is making an impact. A few months after that, reach out to pray with them and connect personally. Wash, rinse, and repeat this process over a number of years, and you'll find you've nurtured a garden full of deep, honoring connection... a connection that fills up and inspires both you and your supporter to press on toward the prize set before us in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

For more on why this matters and how to shift from "donors" to "ministry partners," we recommend Henri Nouwen's 8-chapter booklet, [A Spirituality of Fundraising](#).

Practical Steps

- 1. Pray.** Ask the Lord for guidance - including a goal and who He wants you to invite to increase. Specifically, ask Him to show you what 20 supporters He wants you to invest in and go deeper with this year. If you need [names](#), ask Him for a number of new names to shoot for.
- 2. Connect with your MTD Coach** to set up a strategy call. If you don't have an MTD coach or need a new one, email MTD@reliant.org
- 3. Write out a Top 20 list** of supporters the Lord led you to contact. Narrowing the list to ~20 people makes this project more manageable. *You can always contact the rest of your partners at a later date. Possible people to start with could be:
 - Those who give a smaller amount, but their income has increased since they first started giving.
 - Medium-top tier supporters. These people are usually "all-in" and will prayerfully consider an increase.
 - [Non-current](#) supporters.
 - Those who gave *under* \$3K annually. Invite them to become a monthly, regular giver.
 - Those who gave special gifts or annual gifts totaling *\$3K or more* last year put forward another large gift challenge. Ask them to take the next two days to seek the Lord on how much He wants them to invest in this ministry in the coming 12 months. *Understanding larger-capacity supporters don't tend to give monthly, we offer them an opportunity to increase that fits more within their annual giving mindset.*
- 4. Decide how to reconnect.** Some choose to take a season of reconnecting before calling for increases. Others decide to use the increase ask call as a way to reconnect. See [Matt's story](#) below for one example.
- 5. Calculate your Intentional Gift Amount**

This is a major step in rooting your ask in honoring the partnership (the smaller the team, the more we can stay connected. The deeper the investment, the more we're empowered to invest deeply.) The steps below will lead you to an average gift based on your support goal.

1

Take your total monthly support goal (make sure it's updated!)

2

Divide your goal by the number of supporters you want on your team; the number of supporters you can realistically stay connected to within a year.

Averages:

Single: 50-65

Married (one spouse working MTD): 60-70

Married (both spouses working MTD): 60-75

3

This will give you the average dollar amount you should be challenging new and current donors to give.

Example:

\$6,000 per month support goal divided by 60 supporters = \$100 Intentional Gift amount.

*If a supporter is already giving at or above your Intentional Gift amount, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to an amount to set before your supporter.

6. **Block out chunks of time** on your calendar for phone calls, follow-up & admin (sending emails, entering notes into your database, scheduling reminders, etc).
7. **Pick a script** (see below) you like and rewrite it in your own words.
Remember, you're inviting people into something larger than just money. Also, consider accepting that most of the conversations you will have with your supporters will be about money because that's an element of your relationship (they give to your ministry), and you're part of a non-profit, which means inviting people to give generously to the Kingdom is part of your job. Make peace with this before writing your script.
8. **Pull a monthly giving report.** It's hard to know who increased if you don't have their original gift amount. Save yourself a headache later and download a copy of your monthly giving report *before* you begin asking supporters to increase.
 - From [Toolbox](#), go to MTD, Received Gifts, and filter for recurring gifts. Print or save for your records.
 - Here's a more [detailed tutorial](#) with pictures.
 - PS - while you're there, look to see if you have any "Non-Current" giving (Status drop-down menu). If anyone is on this list, they might be the first to call. Useful scripts & steps are found here: [Calling Non-Current Donors](#)
9. **Set up MPDx to track this appeal.** Here's [how in MPDx](#).
10. **Invite your Top 20 to increase.** Make this ask boldly, vision-driven (NOT because you're getting short-checked), and rooted in prayer. [Examples and scripts](#) are below. Meet regularly with your MTD Coach for encouragement throughout the process.

**You can copy these instructions and send them to your supporter or send them a PDF of this page: [How to Update Your Giving](#)*
 - **Update giving on [Reliant.org](#)**
 - [Log into the website](#)
 - Click the drop-down menu under your name (top right of the screen)
 - Choose "Giving Dashboard." This will bring you to your recurring gifts.
 - Choose "Make Changes."
 - Enter the new recurring gift amount.
 - **Call Gift Services** at 877-614-4600 between the hours of 8 am-4 pm EDT.
 - **Email Gift Services** at gift.services@reliant.org with the request to increase **make sure to use the same email address as used for your Reliant donor account.*
11. **Follow up!** It often takes someone about 7x to hear a message before they act on it. **If you haven't had at least 7 interactions with your supporter about increasing, then it's time for follow-up, not frustration.** Organize your database or calendar to automatically remind you to follow up with those who are making a decision (DOH) or have said yes but haven't increased their giving yet.
 - **Call.** If you get them on the phone, ask if they have 5 minutes for you to walk them through updating their giving online.
 - **Text the link** to the [login page](#) your giving page and instructions on how to increase. (See #10)
 - **3-way call with your supporter and Gift Services** at 877-614-4600, between the hours of 8 am-4 pm, EDT, Mon-Fri.
 - **Supporters can email Gift Services** at gift.services@reliant.org with the request to increase. **make sure to use the same email address as used for their Reliant donor account.*
12. **Discover who gave and thank them.**
 - Pull a giving report at the end of each month to check for increases (See #8).
 - Thank those who increase. The general standard is a **handwritten thank-you card and a phone call.** (Other ideas [HERE](#).)
13. **Plan for ongoing connection**

If we're looking for a *donation*, the conversation generally stops after we've received the gift. If we're looking to build ministry *partnerships*, the gift is simply the launching point to invite further conversation, informed input, and deeper connection.

You will discover everyone has a "poor" and a "rich." Our work, as the Body of Christ, is to minister to each other's "poor" out of our "rich." That wealthy supporter of yours also has a "poor." And you have a "rich." The one-on-one connection allows you to discover these ministry opportunities and lean into them over time.

"Prayer letters are important, but they pale in comparison to one-on-one connections." - Greg, Reliant pastor for over 20 years. Greg has a regular rhythm of texting/calling supporters throughout the year. Sometimes he updates them about what's happening in the ministry. But, most of the time, these calls are his chance to connect with and minister to his supporter. It's no wonder Greg's financial support is consistently strong, even with a large goal.

Testimonials

*My communication with my supporters before inviting them to increase had been lacking. I sent quarterly snail-mail prayer letters but hadn't contacted voice-to-voice in 5-7 years of them. Because of that, it was difficult to start calling donors. I made excuses that I hated the phone, or I couldn't find a good time to call without my kids around. But, once I started calling, I found I enjoyed it. No one was upset. My supporters were just happy to hear from me. I **owned that I hadn't done a good job of keeping in touch** by saying something like, "Hey, I'm super sorry. I haven't done a good job of keeping in touch. This is my attempt to remedy that." A lot of my calls were an hour long. I was fine with that because I was making up for years of only sending prayer letters and not personally connecting.*

Almost half the supporters I contacted did some sort of increase. It was definitely worth it.

*My method: I **texted before calling**. The text would say something like: "Hey, it's Matt. I'm going to give you a call tonight. If that doesn't work, let me know." Once on the phone with my supporter, I'd spend a decent amount of time catching up. After hearing how they were doing and listening for how I could pray for them, the transition to offering them an increase wasn't very difficult. I didn't ask every partner on that first call, but when I did ask, I did it at the end of the call. For the rest, I'd follow up at a later time with the offer to increase. I'd say something like "Hey, we need to raise about \$1,500-\$2,000 a month to stay in full-time ministry ... if you might be in a position to increase, would you prayerfully consider increasing your support?" Then I would discuss a day to follow up (usually 2 days later) and see if that worked for the person. Following up when I said I would was important. There were often multiple follow-ups I had to do.*

*I should also mention that I didn't do it alone. Joining an **MTD Cohort** group provided the structure I needed to raise more support. I appreciated that it was very compartmentalized – we only talked about MTD. I also learned new techniques from others in the cohort. It has been a very helpful resource for me.*

Matt raised about **\$1,500 in new monthly support** through that effort. And gifts from his **end-of-year ask have increased every year** since. *Initially, I was super afraid to ask for my Intentional Gift amount (\$150). It seemed like too big/ too much to ask for some of the people I was calling (like the guy who was just two years out of college). But it's gone really well. I've been surprised. Even the people who can't do that amount they've thanked me for asking them and have said **they feel honored**. Those positive responses have been really encouraging to me to keep making this ask in this way.*

Josiah raised **\$1,000 in new monthly in 2 months**, working ~2 days a week on MTD.

*We decided to connect with a lot of our supporters and invite them to increase. It was a lot of work, but **it was worth it**. We asked our partners if they'd be willing to pray about increasing to our Intentional Gift amount. We prayed before the call, asking God to tell us what we should challenge them to increase to. Maybe 1/3 of our supporters increased.*

*Our method: We made the ask. Asked them to pray. Then **we followed up until we got an answer**. Both required guts & time. Looking back, I wish I had been texting supporters regularly throughout the year, asking how I could pray for them or asking them to pray for us. That was a big thing we learned from this process of inviting our supporters to increase. Now we'll send out random texts like: "Hey, we're meeting with this couple tonight who is struggling. Would you pray for this meeting?" It really helps us stay connected with our partners and gives our partners other connection points to the ministry work they're invested in.*

*Reflections from Doug: The increase ask process was so cool. We presented the **Intentional Gift** amount. We asked people, "Would you pray about it?" And then we would follow up. Some people were like, "Oh. Is that all?" There was one grouchy guy. But, **the vast majority of people felt honored** and were honest with us about what they were able to do. Sarah was really good about seeking the Lord on what we should ask people to lift their giving to. One person was already at the Intentional Gift Amount, and Sarah asked them to pray about increasing to double that.. and they did it! It helped to connect personally with our supporters before we went into an increase ask campaign. We found that people were honored and, if they could, they would increase. We discovered that many people "try out" new field workers at a smaller amount at first. So, **there is room to grow if you're faithful to engage them!** **Using the Intentional Gift amount in my invitation to increase** has helped me think through how many supporters I can handle while also maintaining a connection with them.*

I appreciated putting the Intentional Gift out there with my supporters because it gave me the freedom to talk about my reality of wanting a relationship and connection with them. I'd say something like, "The reason I'm asking this amount is for the purpose of building the right team - and the right size team - to see this work accomplished." And I saw that when I put my Intentional Gift amount out there, people would consider it!

After Sarah shared this in a cohort, one of the people on the call expressed concern over offending someone who can only give a small amount. He gave the example of a teacher on a small salary. Here's how Sarah related: *I've worked as a teacher on a very low salary for most of my life. The field workers I support... well, I wish I had someone help me think through who I am investing in and what's the impact of my giving. Am I giving to these people because I feel obligated or out of a joyful heart? Am I really praying over all 8 of these field workers as frequently as I want to? **How can I put my money where my heart is?** As a teacher who made very little, I would have really appreciated having one of the field workers I supported taking the time to educate me, ask some of those questions, and **help me be more intentional and prayerful in my financial partnerships**. I used to shy away from talking with my supporters about their giving. But, I've come to accept that most of the conversations I have with my supporters will be about money because I'm part of a non-profit, and inviting people to give joyfully and generously to the Kingdom is part of my job. I'm beginning to really enjoy this part of my job.*

Scripts

*Rewrite in your own words and have it in front of you when you call supporters.

Ask for a current supporter to seek the Lord if it's time to increase their impact by increasing their ministry giving.

After years of being in ministry, I've realized it's been hard to keep up with a large financial support team. So, I'm really looking forward to keeping up with a smaller number of people that I can stay personally connected with. They know me, and I know what's going on in their lives (and that sort of thing). But what that means is I do need to have a higher average per gift. And, for me, that averages out to about \$150 per donor. And I'm wondering if you'd be willing to be one of those partners with us at that amount... or something else.

Read [How to Find New Names](#) *see *Top 3 Donor Traits* section

Script: We know we aren't meant to do this alone. Ministry is sustained through community – through MANY people offering their gifts – that's what makes it happen. You've been one of those vital people on my team for the last X years, and I want to thank you for your partnership and remind you that you're building the Kingdom through your giving.

My goal with this is to be able to invest deeply in those who are investing deeply in the ministry. And I want you to be one of those people.

Would you take the next 24 hours to ask the Lord if He would have you increase to an intentional gift of \$150 a month?

(Yes, I'll pray)

Great, I'll pray for you as well during that time. Does it work for you if I give you a call tomorrow around this same time - to see what the Lord said to you? *If they ask for more time, that's fine. But keep the timeframes short, under a week, if possible. This avoids the task going into the "do later" pile in someone's brain.*

You know there are many ways to support this work: prayer coverage, coming and serving alongside us, faithful financial giving, and connecting me with people who might be as passionate about this ministry effort as you are. As I was talking earlier about what I'll be doing, was there anyone the Lord brought to your mind? *pause for response*

I'd love to connect with them. Could you put us in touch?

My goal with this is to be able to invest deeply in those who are investing deeply in the ministry. And I want you to be one of those people. Would you take the next 24 hours to ask the Lord if He would have you increase your giving to this ministry to *\$Intentional Gift* or some other amount? *(wait for a response)*

I will pray for you in the meantime. Let's see... it's 1:30 now... how about I call you tomorrow at 1:30 to reconnect and see what the Lord has done? Is that a good time for you?

I have some good news! The Lord is leading me to take the next step in ministry. I'll be working with students and sharing the gospel. As my commitment to ministry increases, it feels natural to reach out to my support team - those who are taking this journey with me - to ask you to pray about also increasing your investment in this Kingdom work. I have \$300 monthly or \$3,600 annually left to raise. I've seen God work so clearly over the last month – the people of God are giving out of faith and not fear. It's been incredible to experience, and now I'm almost across the finish line! So, I'd like to ask: Would you take the next 24 hours to ask the Lord if He is desiring for you to increase your commitment of giving toward ministry? *(wait for a response)* Great! I will commit to praying for you over the next 24 hours as well. I'll reach back out with a phone call at this same time tomorrow. Does that work for you?

When building a team, it is important to have the right number of people. Too few, and we can not participate. Too many, and the majority are left out, getting no playing time. As you know, this ministry is made possible because of the generosity of others. In building my team, I am praying for the right number of members so the financial need is met, AND I am able to stay personally connected. What that would mean is each of my partners contributes an average of \$150 a month. Would you prayerfully consider increasing your gift?

Hi ____ I was just calling like I said I would—I just wanted to see how it was going in seeking the Lord on that invitation to increase your support. Feel free to give me a call back whenever it's convenient, otherwise, I will try calling you again on (day). Have a wonderful day!

Additional Resources

[How to Update Your Giving](#)

[How to Find New Names](#) *see *Top 3 Donor Traits* section

[Annual Stewardship Plan & Timeline](#)

[Guide for Returning to Full-Time MTD](#)

Suggestions for this page?

We want to hear it! Email us at MTD@Reliant.org