

Section Four

Finances

‘With a city-wide prayer rally especially, the area of finances becomes a critical part of the overall planning process. With hundreds and often thousands of people attending, expenses for facilities, equipment rental, promotion, and printing are usually unavoidable. So be ready to enter into this part of the planning process with fullness of faith!

The area of finances is also a spiritual ministry! If God has led you to call your church or city together for prayer, He will also provide the appropriate resources to underwrite the expenses of this mission. It is possible, however, to either overestimate the sources of your income or to underestimate what God can provide for financing His ministry~ Great discernment is needed.

The Rally Offering

An offering taken at your prayer rally is often the main source of income to cover the budget for the event. Our studies have shown that an offering at a rally will average between three and four dollars per person.

If, for example, there are 1,000 participants in a city-wide rally, you can expect the offering to bring in between \$3,000 and \$4,000. If there are 5,000 participants in the city-wide rally, the offering should bring in between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Therefore, if you plan a budget based on 5,000 people and only 1,000 participate, the financial ramifications are obvious.

If then, you rent a facility that seats 5,000 because you anticipate 5,000 participants, you must do everything possible to see that 5,000 people are present. That is why the recruitment process explained in Section 2 is so important.

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Other Sources of Income

Because much of the expense for a Concert of Prayer rally is incurred before the actual event, it is wise to explore other sources of income.

Individual churches may make a one-time contribution to help fund the city-wide Concert of Prayer. If ten churches give \$300 each, that \$3,000 can help pay for materials and promotion in advance of the rally.

Some churches may be willing to give a \$500 loan to be paid back out of the offering when the rally occurs. Of course, there is some risk associated with this if, in fact, the offering does not cover all of the bills. In some areas churches make a loan to the Steering Committee, which is paid back according to the size of the offering.

In some cases, agencies and vendors are willing to hold bills until after the offering has been collected, and then be reimbursed. Whatever the case, careful planning and a great deal of prayer should be done during the forming of the budget and the process of identifying the expected sources of income.

In some areas Christian businessmen or churches are willing to provide part of the equipment or supply photocopying or printing services at no cost. When Christian businesses offer free or reduced-rate services, you can pay them, then ask them to write a check to the Steering Committee for the same amount. You can then provide the donor with a tax-deductible receipt.

Other sources of income:

- ***Church contributions***
- ***Loans payable from offering***
- ***Donated services***

Planning Your Finances

In the Appendix you'll find a *Rally Finance Checklist* for a city-wide Concert of Prayer. Be sure to include any additional budget expenses you foresee in your particular situation.

What follows here are some questions your Steering Committee may find useful early on in the planning process:

1. As a leadership team, pray together and discuss your attitudes toward raising funds for this rally.
2. Consider together the immediate and longer term expenditures you can foresee. Express this in cash amounts. Some expenditure categories might include design and printing of letterhead, printing and mailing of flyers and programs, newspaper ads, radio spots, facility rental, telephone budget, sound system rental, ushers and parking attendants, follow-up, etc.
3. Together, brainstorm a list of funding sources that can help you meet these categories of need. Rank them in terms of both viability and acceptability.

4. How will you account for your income and expenditures? Is there someone on the Steering Committee who could serve as the treasurer? Who will be responsible for approving expenditures and signing checks?

5. Do you want to incorporate as a non-profit organization? Can this be done by associating with another non-profit organization or church as an “umbrella” outreach? (If you call the *Concerts of Prayer International* office, we may be able to provide you with contacts from regional prayer movement organizations. You may be able to approach them to co-sponsor your committee.)

6. If the rally offering is greater than the costs for the event, how will the surplus be spent? Some Committees designate any surplus to a local non-denominational charity like a homeless shelter. Others place the surplus funds in an account to cover promotional costs for another Concert of Prayer the following year. Some Steering Committees choose to use any surplus funds to help the prayer movement in other areas. If this is something you would like to do, we would welcome your designated gift mailed to: *Concerts of Prayer International, P.O. Box 770*
New Providence, NJ 07974, U.S.A.

It is important to communicate your financial needs and plans to those at the Concert of Prayer. Some Committees have found it helpful to mention their budget needs along with the number of people present. In other words, you might say something like, “The costs for this rally are about \$2,400. We have 600 people here tonight, which averages to about \$4 each. If you’d keep that in mind when the offering is taken we’d be very grateful. If donations surpass the costs of the rally, the surplus will be given to the Hometown food pantry.”

Be sure to keep careful records as expenses are incurred and contributions are collected. It is important as Christ’s stewards and representatives within our communities, to be both responsible and above reproach in our financial dealings.

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your budget
needs to those at
the rally.***

Offering Procedures

If there is an offering, and we strongly suggest that you do take one, it can fit very nicely into the program format in one of two places—toward the beginning or toward the end.

An advantage of taking an offering early in the program is that you avoid disrupting the flow or momentum of the final segments of the Concert of Prayer. On the other hand, by the end of the Concert of Prayer people have a better understanding of what the united prayer movement is about, and

are able to respond in thanksgiving for what God has done during the evening.

If possible, use special envelopes for the offering at a city-wide gathering. These envelopes should include the name of the Concert of Prayer event (for example, *Prayer '96* or *Toronto Concert of Prayer*) and a mailing address. This will allow people who wish to take an envelope home with them to mail a check later on.

Be sure to include a space on the envelope for the name, address, city, and church affiliation of the donor. It is also wise to give people an opportunity to indicate whether the offering is in cash or in a check. The envelope should also indicate how to make out the check and ask whether the donor wants a receipt. (*Sample envelopes can be found in the Appendix.*)

Ushers and Counters

In preparation for the offering you must begin to recruit ushers. You may want to ask Section Leaders to choose one person in their section to help take up the offering. Or, you may request participating churches to ask for volunteers from among their ushers. Whatever the strategy, make sure that you have enough ushers to take up the offering quickly and efficiently.

In addition to ushers, you will also need people to count the offering. In larger rallies this will take between two and three hours, so it is important that people know in advance that they are making this kind of time commitment.

You will also need a sufficient number of adding machines and money wrappers, along with a plan to deposit the offering as quickly as possible.

Because of the public scrutiny of religious events, it is important to avoid any possibility of question concerning our financial responsibility. Therefore, it is good to count the money on-site, with a number of people who can verify what is received.

In a larger rally with several thousand people, it is wise to have some kind of security arrangements. You may find a volunteer, off-duty policeman from a participating congregation, or you may decide to hire a security guard. This will discourage any possibility of robbery.

It is also necessary to find a sufficient number of offering containers. In larger rallies you may need as many as 200 containers. One good option is

It is absolutely essential to be both responsible and above reproach in all matters regarding finances.

the use of large, empty ice cream cans. You may find a local ice cream manufacturer in your area who is willing to donate them.

A supply list and a procedure for counting the offering are included in the Appendix.