

Prime time to make a difference

by Tiffany Kellogg Pittman

Working for a seminary gives me several perks. I worship regularly with peers and colleagues fine-tuning their skills for ministry. I hear call story after call story of ways in which God is moving and good things are happening in the kin-dom at hand. I also have access to a network of people who discuss the many ways we can give to nonprofit institutions to ensure their financial future.

You've probably heard that the new tax code includes changes to charitable giving deductions. If you're like me, the idea of having to learn a new way to be charitable is intimidating. Although it's true some things have changed, it's also true an easy and beneficial way to give to nonprofits has stayed the same. Specifically, I'm talking about contributing appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds.

The transfer of stocks has many valuable side benefits. I know many hear the words "transfer of stock" and visions of the New York Stock Exchange, people shouting financial jargon and the red and green scrolling numbers indicating highs and lows start flooding our minds. But what I found out is transferring stock requires very little effort on one's part. Sandi Lafata, director of development at Eden Theological Seminary says, "In one quick phone call to your broker you can make a gift of a securities to your favorite charity." This is true of the Alliance of Baptists. It really is that easy!

While the action of transferring stocks is easy, there are many benefits to this type of giving. One obvious but most important to note is the money doesn't have to come from your bank account. If you donate appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds instead of cash, you still receive a charitable deduction at full, fair market value. You can leverage the impact of your donation to a greater degree than with cash – and receive a tax benefit – when you buy low and give high. You make a gift that costs you less than the benefit it delivers to both you and the charity.

Some of these benefits include:

- Your money is worth more. Stock value has doubled since 2007.
- No Capital Gains tax. If you gift your stock before you cash in, you won't have to pay capital gains. You can reduce your income tax liability by giving your appreciated stocks.
- You can use the "bunching" strategy. Our new tax laws allow you to give two years' worth of contributions in one single year. In the short term, you are helping your charity by giving a larger amount. In the long term, you could be saving more in taxes. Read more about bunching from Fidelity's website:
<https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/articles/will-tax-reform-affect-your-charitable-deduction.shtml>.
- It can be a reoccurring action. Like some people who make monthly contributions to the Alliance, the transfer of stock can be set up as a quarterly gift as well.

What I have learned is I can diversify the way in which I give to my charities. When it is a leaner financial year for my family, I can use other methods of giving – like the transfer of stock – that bring many benefits to me as well as the organization I am supporting. The action of giving should not be stressful or burdensome to you and your family. As Sandi Lafata said, “Transfer of stock is an easy way to give to your favorite charity. You don’t have to take it out of a paycheck during the holiday season. This year is a prime time to make a difference with appreciated stock.”

If you would like to learn the procedures of how to transfer stock to the Alliance of Baptists, please contact Jason Smith at jason@allianceofbaptists.org.

Tiffany Kellogg Pittman is a member of the Alliance of Baptists board of directors and serves on the development and communications committees. She also is the director of admissions at Eden Theological Seminary, an Alliance theological school partner.