

Stewardship

When I was a kid, my brothers and I would put our heels against the wall while our father measured us with a yardstick. Being the tallest was a great value. Somehow, in our minds, tallest meant best.

The measuring led to competition. As we grew older, we learned to test and judge others by our measurement. Who makes the most money, has the most prestigious job, lives in the nicest home, and on and on.

Our competitive minds constantly demand that we find out who is winning and who is best. We have deceived ourselves into believing that more is better.

A family may have two cars in the garage and two boats in the lagoon, but the family sense of sharing may not go further than passing out drinks at a cocktail party.

They probably don't know what they're missing. It is possible for any family to become wrapped up in themselves. However, there isn't much warmth in those wrappings.

Jesus set the tone for responsible stewardship. He set the tone for any number of Christian practices that make some of us uneasy, and we ignore them.

There are many kinds of stewardship. How about running through a stewardship checklist? How do you rate yourself as a steward in these areas:

Stewardship in the church

Do I try to see how much I can give, or how little? Do I feel responsibility




for taking part in what's happening in my church?

Stewardship in the world

Everything that may be said about stewardship relates to my thoughtfulness about sharing a clean atmosphere, healthful food and the resources of nature with the whole community.

Stewardship of the purse

Am I generous with everything except my own money?

Stewardship is liberating, the precise opposite of believing that more is better. It is required of Christians, but it feels good, too. 

Stewardship is based on the biblical principle that God is the only true owner and giver of all things. All we possess ... our time, our abilities, our very lives ... we hold in trust from God. It is to God that we shall render an account of our administration of that trust.



A Open Letter to God

Dearest God,
Last year we made a commitment of \$35 a week to help carry on your work here at St. Mark. We felt confident we could pay it because that is only 3% of our salary. When I was cleaning the house yesterday, I noticed my box of church envelopes and realized that we have not done this, and I thought we'd better make an explanation directly to you.

Shortly after we made our commitment, the Christmas bills came in. I will admit I over-extended myself on gifts, but you must know that nice gifts are expensive! I did intend to put in a little extra gift for Christ on his birthday, but after buying all the other presents for the people on my list, we just couldn't afford it.

After Christmas, we had to scrape together money for income tax. Last year my husband got a nice raise in salary, and that put us in a higher income bracket. Since he moved up in the company, we also had to increase our standard of living, to keep pace with our friends, and that costs money ... you know.

Sorry we missed so much church this past year, but with the new camper it was just too hard to stay home on all those beautiful weekends. After vacation, it was school again, and you know how expensive it is to get clothes for all the kids. I want them to dress nicely too, not just in bargain store clothes. And then I really needed a new coat. My old one was just so out of style I felt embarrassed. Lord, have you priced new coats lately?

Now here it is January again and

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I'm a busy man," warned Buck Busy "Please, don't waste my time!" He gave this response to everyone who approached him for joining in the church work or for Christian charity.

Pastor Don Goodly commented, "He is pretending a great busyness, while fussing with petty details." "I get that feeling too," agreed old Sam Elder. "However, Buck contributes regularly. We don't see Buck very often, but we see his money." "Despite his faults, I like Buck," pleaded old Sam. "Perhaps if you and I saw him, we could open his eyes."

When they did get together, Sam started the discussion: "Buck, you seem to realize that all things come from God and that we must give God his fair share of our wealth. Do you believe that?" "I not only believe it, I do it!" Buck confirmed. "I hope the church is happy with my giving."

"Your church appreciates your financial giving, but like wealth, time is a gift from God and we need to give God his fair share," Pastor Don counseled.

"How do I do that?" asked Buck.

"By regular attendance at church, by participation in the work of the church and by service to your fellow men and women," explained the pastor.

"Oh, I can do that alright, but I can't start until next month. I have so much

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Jesus said: "Stop worrying, then, over questions like, 'What are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear?' The unbelievers are always running after these things. Your heavenly father knows all that you need. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides"

Matthew 6:31-33

The Good Steward

We all should grasp the meaning of Christ's message about assuming responsibility on behalf of God's kingdom. After all, your church community needs the time and talents of its servants of God.

To be sure, we are not all expected to live in such dramatic fashion as the saints. Only a few of us, if any, will be called to make a large splash in history. But you may be sure each of us is called to serve where God plants us and it doesn't really matter whether or not we become well known. What matters

is that we be faithful. What matters is that we do the special work that we feel God has led us to do, however menial it may seem to be. Brother Lawrence cleaned pots and pans and cooked for the glory of God and the service of his fellow man. A humble layman, Harry Denman thought of every human as his brother or sister, his son or daughter, and he treated each person with love and dignity. He always made sure in a loving way that they knew the Good News of Christ. 



Steward of the Month


Santa Inés Ángel

Enviado por: Melissa, N. Huntingdon, PA

Angels come in many forms, gender and race. When reading the *Steward of the Month*, I was compelled to submit Mike De Felice's name.

Mike is a pillar of the church and community. He is well loved, respected and known by the entire community. Mike is an electrician by trade and serves his church as well as the community in many ways. He is a true steward by sharing time, talent and finances to help anyone in need. The following is just a short list of things Mike has done to share his time and talent:

- He is a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and has gone to Mexico to help repair local orphanages.
- He assists the elderly and low income with tax returns and financial advice.
- He assembles and organizes all electrical equipment of the annual church bazaar.
- He assists with home repairs and snow removal for the widowed, needy and local veterans.
- He is always willing to volunteer, organize and initiate sponsorship of anything that promotes serving God.

Mike exemplifies and what a true steward should be. It is a pleasure to have him as a member of the church and we are truly blessed by his stewardship! 

We are judged by what we do, and only in doing can we give example. Christians practice stewardship by sharing with those in need their God-given time, talents and money as an act of thanks to God for all his gifts to them.



“You have been mighty good to us, and I don’t want you to think we are ungrateful.”

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An Open Letter...

time to pay the Christmas bills. It is going to take every penny I can scrape together!

So you can easily see, Lord, that we can’t increase our contribution right now. I want you to know, however, that just as soon as we can we are going to make a truly sacrificial offering. You have been mighty good to us, and I don’t want you to think we are ungrateful. As soon as we get the kids through school, and the house paid for, we will be in shape to offer a thankful gift and will be glad to do it. That ought not take more than 15 years or so.

And another thing, Lord, in the future you can expect to see us in church more often. Also, we want to take part in church activities. But, we are still young, and we know there will be plen-

ty of years ahead when we can catch up on our church work.

In the meantime, Lord, thank you for being so good to us, and we want you to know that we love you. 

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Old Sam Elder

work to do,” Buck faltered.

“You still don’t get the picture!” cautioned old Sam Elder. “Promise me that you will carefully read James 4:15-17. We all need to give God his due time while we are yet able.” 