

Stewardship

A midwestern seminary recently carried an account of two adult daughters of their deceased father. Their father was very dear to them and they wanted some way to create a memorial that would honor him always. Here is how they went about it:

First, they decided to search for a seminary that had the kind of spiritual character their father would appreciate. After investigating several schools, they found one near Chicago, which they thought was capable of producing graduates of their father's caliber.

Secondly, to make certain they had chosen the right seminary, they paid a visit to the school. After interviewing several of the administrators, teachers and students, they were so impressed with the dedication of those whom they met and the quality of the education offered, they were certain that was the place where they wanted to establish their father's memorial.

Thirdly, they decided to do something a bit unusual. Instead of providing a fairly large lump sum to be put in bricks and mortar, they decided to establish a scholarship named after their father, and to which they would make monthly gifts.

Repeated giving

One of them wrote to the school and explained their reasoning. "Once you decide that giving is something you want to do," her letter said, "it is only a short step to the realization that anything worth giving to is worth giving to repeatedly."

Those are words worth pondering. "Anything worth giving to is worth giving to repeatedly." *Those words seem es-*



pecially apropos when it comes to God's church. The church is worth giving to repeatedly, year by year, month by month, week by week.

The importance of your church

The church is where we worship God. It is where we learn of God's message for us. It is where we prepare ourselves to serve an ailing world. It is where we give of our time, talent and financial resources to carry out the mission of Christ described in the New Testament. Thinking about the impressive ministry of God's church in the world inspires us to affirm that it is worth giving to repeatedly.

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Our need to be givers is more important than the need of anyone to receive from us. It is essential to life to be a giver because to give is to live and to live is to love, and to love is to give.



Time in the New Year

There is something about the beginning of a brand new year of our life that has a certain fateful quality about it.


We know that the days ahead are filled with all kinds of possibilities, and our minds and hearts are full of hope that those days will be good ones.



If we're realistic, we know that they can't really be 100% good, so we stand on the brink of another year ... usually ... with mixed hopes and fears, wondering what we can do to make it a good year.

Insofar as we are responsible, whether it's a good year or not will depend to a very great extent on what we do with the very valuable commodity we have ... called time. That is to say, on our stewardship of time, because stewardship is what we do with what we have.

The great cry on every side these days of course is: "I don't have time!" But the plain and simple fact is that we do have time.

The differences come in our stewardship; what we do with this vital dimension of our being. The question for all of us is never really "Do I have time?" 




Old Sam Elder and his wife Betty were given a surprise 60th wedding anniversary party by their church. Sam was deeply touched, realizing once more the value of fellowship in a church. Old Sam declared, "One of God's greatest gifts is people who sincerely care about you."

Pastor Don Goodly commented, "Perhaps, people are simply returning the care and concern you have always had for them."

"I guess that when I truly like people and care about them, it's bound to show," mused Sam. "In the beginning, I simply tried to be pleasant. Life is too short for anything less than that. This habit I now have of smiling at people and directing my prayers at them developed gradually. I grew to love people in general and to especially love those close to me: my family, my church and my co-workers."

Pastor Don Goodly smiled, "Sam, I think you have just explained the very essence of Christian stewardship."

"Perhaps. But this I do know," Sam continued, "fellowship to me is the essence of Christian joy. Somewhere in my Sunday School days I was taught that the measure of a person is their care for others." 

The desire to share with others flows from a Christian commitment. The key to financial discipline is to get our sharing with others and our spending on ourselves into the right order of priority. If we spend first, we won't have much left to share. If we share first, we'll manage to live on the rest.

The Good Steward


Glorifying God by our love and obedient actions is what Christ has in mind for us. That is how we prove we are his friends, his disciples.

We can turn to great Christians who have proven their discipleship, like Mother Teresa, or Albert Schweitzer.

But let's consider some ordinary souls, people we find in our midst, those whom we know personally. The "doers of the word, and not hearers only." (James 1:22)

I think of Harley and Mae, who deliver Meals on Wheels to the sick and shut in. When they are not doing that, they are at their church volunteering their time and effort to do whatever needs to be done.

Consider other faithful servants of the Lord whom we have known. Godly religion teachers, or dedicated choir members, volunteering their talents.

Of course, the challenge is for each of us to examine ourselves. "By this my Father is glorified," said our Lord, "that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." So let's prove it, beginning today. 




How Far Does Money Go?

Often we talk about "making ends meet," "stretching a dollar," or "getting the most for our money." When we speak this way we're usually concerned with the sensible use of our buying power and the balance between our income and our spending. We're referring to covering our general expenses and basic household necessities for ourselves and our family. It's related to our own needs and life style.

But there is another kind of spending that is very different and far reaching. This is our contribution to our church and to those in need. It should be a significant enough share of our wealth so that we have to give up something in order to make our gift.

The biggest problem we face is how to divide our money between the spiritual and material aspects of life. No matter how small our income, the task before us is how to divide it proportionately between our own needs and the needs of our church community.

One of the greatest joys we have is that God allows us the privilege of steering our offering into places we think God wants it used. Through our contributions we are directly in ministry. How far does this money go? We'll never know how many people it touches or what the ripple effect will be. But what a blessing to be part of something so big and so wonderful! 

There is a wide choice of things that you can do for God and neighbor, in and through your church community ... if you have the good will. With good will you also find the necessary time for such projects, even though you may have to cut and pare in other directions.

"The earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land and then take steps to destroy it for use by future generations."

John Paul II




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A midwestern seminary...

The daughter who wrote the letter to the school said a few other things worthy of our consideration. She wrote of the importance of small gifts, even when we may think they are insignificant. “A gift that honors God and blesses mankind is never insignificant,” she said. “Small gifts, when given regularly, will grow to become large gifts. Besides, the true measure of one’s generosity is not in how much one gives, but in what, why, to whom, and how.”

will benefit from the scholarship fund as they prepare to serve one another and serve Christ through God’s church. Now that is an inspiring thought! 

An inspiring thought

Surely those two ladies in their attitude, outlook, and action have been very creative and thoughtful in memorializing their father. They are remembering their beloved father in a worthy manner month after month after month. Think also, of the many students over the years who

