

Suggested elements for Church Magazines On Stewardship and Giving

Christian Stewardship – *What on earth is it?*

When the word 'Stewardship' gets mentioned in church it is very easy to simply think... "**oh, they want more money**" – but is that really what it is all about? Christian Stewardship is actually much more than just finance. So what exactly are we talking about...?

Christian Stewardship is actually a way of life in which we regard ourselves and our possessions as a trust from God to be used in His service, for what He has done for us in Jesus Christ.

This means that we are stewards of everything God has given us:

our time, our abilities, our possessions, our money, our whole lives

"But can you define it in one simple sentence?" –

"Yes! In fact, several times over, take your pick..."

Christian Stewardship is...

- Christianity in practice. It's creative and joyful living as a Child of God.
- The systematic giving of body, mind and spirit to God.
- Being responsible before God for all that I have and all that I am
- The total discipline by which the people of God mobilise their God-given resources to carry out the Great Commission.
- A challenge and a privilege that effects the whole of our lives as Christians.
- Hitching one's wagon to the power house behind the universe.
- The measure of faithfulness in carrying out given responsibilities.
- Waste-watching!
- The practising of the gratitude of attitude to God.
- A way of life – not just a programme.
- Our complete and joyful obedience to God, who entrusts to us the management of life and possessions, that the world might know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
- What I do after I say 'I believe'.

"Think of it like this..."

Total commitment could turn your 'collection' into an 'offering'.

Christian Stewardship is not about making ends meet, it is about looking to an expanding Church, even in a time of recession and especially in Evangelism. Stewardship is not about giving only what is needed, but it is about giving so generously that it has a touch of

recklessness about it. Stewardship is not about one institution giving grudgingly to another, but rejoicing in the mission of others within our one Church. That is the attitude of God's giving to us, and that is the message for our churches.

So lets reflect on this...

The first question to ask is **not**:

'What do I need to give?'

but;

'How can my giving reflect something of God's love for me?'

GIVE....To God what is right



Not what is left

God looks at the heart, not the hand – the giver, not the gift

“So let's consider some...”

STEWARDSHIP MYTHS AND TRUTHS

Literal definition of Stewardship:

“Holding in trust and managing the estate of another.”

Myth	Truth
“A tithe (10%) is God's.”	“All 100% belongs to God.”
“Giving to the church is giving to God.”	“Using all our resources faithfully is giving to God.”
“Stewardship is our responsibility to the church.”	“Stewardship is our responsibility AS the church.”
“Stewardship is about money.”	“Stewardship is about life.”
“Financial stewardship encourages equal gifts.”	“Financial stewardship encourages equal sacrifice.”
“Give until it hurts!”	“Give until it feels good!”
“We give as we are informed.”	“We give as we believe.”
“We give as we prosper.”	“We give as we believe.”
“We give according to need.”	“We give as we believe.”
“We give as we are able.”	“We give as we believe.”

Stewards are people who guide and help and make things work. For example, stewards are very effective at Rugby internationals or pop concerts. As members of the church WE ARE STEWARDS of God's Word. God asks us to help him to guide his people to a Christian faith.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, takes a human place within the world and claims it as his own. He calls us to join him, bringing back this world of things to its proper place under God's authority. He makes us responsible for it. This is called 'Stewardship'.

**We come into the world with nothing.
We leave with nothing.
We have responsibility for the stewardship of all that we are given in between.**

Ifs...

If I give nothing

I cast a vote in favour of closing my local church.

If I give only to local support

I vote to stop missionary activity in this hour of great world need.

If I give proportionately

I will give something even if, of necessity, mine must be small.

If I give systematically

I make it possible for my church to plan in advance and make it easier for myself.

If I give sacrificially

I shall testify to the high value I place upon Christ and the Church in ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of suffering humanity.

So...

- God has put enough money in the pockets of Christians to do everything he expects of them.
- It's odd, in a church with people of great faith, to have financial problems.
- Giving is the thermometer of our love.
- Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.
- When giving to God, we are just taking our hands off what belongs to him.
- Stewardship involves the whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole of the world, and to the whole of every person.
- Christian Stewardship can become a way of life, and lead to a meaningful personal relationship with God and the Holy Spirit.
- Christian Stewardship has got nothing to do with chance. It is about certainty, faith and faithfulness.
- Each new day is a gift from God and also an opportunity for further service in the name of Jesus Christ.
- A Christian Steward fulfils his or her responsibilities as God-given tasks, in a joyful response to Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Stewardship isn't mainly about meeting budgets. It's more about opening our lives to God's Spirit. That's why stewardship and growth go together.

Over the centuries many books have been written to give an explanation for some of the words of Jesus
Today many people are still confused about many aspects of Christianity. Therefore the simple Christian Stewardship principles of giving a generous measure of our time, talents and money to God to be used in the name of Jesus Christ for the benefit of humanity, has great appeal to all right thinking followers of Jesus.

A Personal Stewardship Prayer:

All that I am, all I can be, all that I have, all that is me, accept and use Lord, as you would choose Lord, right now today!

Take every passion, every skill, take all my dreams and bend them to your will.

May all I give Lord, for you I'll live Lord; come what may.