

Stewardship

Everyone has time! How we use that time is a challenge. Some people are always busy, but complain they never get anything done. These people jump from one task to another, start one thing and really never finish anything. Others are busy, they organize their time, finish one task at a time and are always ready to do more because they know how to use their time wisely.

In order to use our time wisely, the first priority should be to spend it with God. Begin the day with prayer. "In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6). Let God lead you in what you have to do.

Each one of us must decide what is important. List your priorities: Job, family, keeping your home in good order, church work, visiting with friends, hobby or recreation. Begin to make lists and as you finish a task cross it off the list. Always finish one thing before starting another.

If people are overworked, it is possible they can't say no when someone asks them to be on a committee or chair a bake sale, etc. Sometimes we are busy on this committee, that committee, in the community, church, school and this leaves us no time for family. Again, priority of time is important and you can learn to say "NO."

God has given us our life and each day. Each day has 24 hours, each hour has 60 minutes, and each minute has 60 seconds. Make the most of your time and when there is no time left it will be time to go home to God. ☩

A hastily parked car belonging to a teenaged boy was idling on our street. It held a rear bumper sticker declaring: "I'm spending money I don't have, on things I don't need, to impress people I don't know."

Hopefully, the young man intends this sentiment to be humorous, rather than an honest reflection of his life. But there is a truth here: People of all ages do need to get their priorities in order. Christians call this stewardship.

Good stewardship means using everything wisely. It means doing the right thing for the right reason. It means striving for the best. Our responsibility is to keep growing in love for God, put our faith into practice, and allow God to continually enrich our lives. One way to do this is to use everything God gives us in serving God.



Summarizing one great Christian's teachings, our motto for living and giving can be: "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, in every place you can, as long as you can." Enjoy the blessings of good stewardship! ☩

As stewards, we are accountable to God for our time, talent and treasure.

We return to the Lord, the giver of all our gifts, a truly grateful first share of our time, talent and treasure.





For centuries, lighthouses have been placed along coasts and islands across the world. Their beacons have prevented countless shipwrecks and saved countless lives. It's not surprising that many people feel affectionate toward them, and want to preserve those which are in danger of being torn down.

Today, lighthouses still in use are automated. But before modern times, lighthouse keepers led lonely lives. Maintaining the light required long hours of work. The pay was usually low. And yet, these people rarely complained. They knew the importance of their task.

The greatest gift of the keepers was their time spent building fires, polishing lenses, and repairing rescue equipment. Day by day, often for years, the keepers gave this time to save others. Because they used their time unselfishly, sailors and travelers lived who otherwise would have died.

Lighthouses are sometimes used as a symbol for Christ. He too provides constant guidance, just as the keepers did. In return for his help, shouldn't we spend more of our time helping others? It may be that we might unknowingly save some lives as well. 

Have you ever played Hide and Seek? Most children have. For me, the most exciting part was when the person who is "It" uncovered his or her eyes and shouted, "Ready or not, here I come!" That's when the game really begins; the hiding is just like setting up pieces on a chess board. The players hiding would have to ready at that time, for fear of getting found.

Many of us postpone donating time, talent, and treasure completely, waiting for "just the right time," which seems to be always moving ahead, because we rarely reach it. And many others do try to practice good stewardship, but again, "just don't think they're ready" to raise their commitment to their church when asked.

But the needs of the church and community will not wait. They call out, "Ready or not, here we come!"

Children need tutoring and supplies *now* to succeed in school. Shut-ins need visits *now* to relieve their loneliness. The hungry need a food pantry *now*, and so on. Shouting, "Time out! I'm not ready!" might work in Hide and Seek, but not in the real world. These needs, and many others, must be met. So as Christians, we have to "get ready, set, and go" out to all the world, and give. 

Sharing our gifts with others brings satisfaction, peace and joy to the giver's heart. St. Paul once remarked: "...we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)





A good steward is to be a cheerful giver, but to whom should we give? First on our list should be the local church which should support its ministers and leaders, aid the poor, assist true widows and orphans, and support traveling teachers and evangelists. Beyond our church, we should consider other believers with proven integrity. It is only prudent to know to whom we are giving and what they will do with the money. If they won't answer all our questions, we shouldn't give. Finally, those to whom we give should regularly keep us informed about their ministry just as the Apostle Paul kept the Philippians informed about his.

If the local church were to fulfill these God-given responsibilities, the community would see the church as its servant, and would be more receptive to its message. If individuals followed these guidelines, we could be ensured of making solid investments with eternal rewards. 



Our cruise ship softly rippled through the waters of New York's harbor, as we slowly passed the Statue of Liberty. I joined other passengers seeking a close look at this majestic work of art.

But was it only the artwork impressing me? No, there was deeper symbolism – great ideals! *Freedom! Responsibility!*

The statue was a centennial gift to the United States from France. The United States erected and financed its pedestal. But an interesting twist happened in America, when raising money for the pedestal went much too slowly.

While exercising freedom, the rich were not giving needed financial support. And the middle-class was freely depending on the rich to provide the money! Joseph Pulitzer used his 19th century newspaper to encourage contributions. Pulitzer's editorials urged all people to patriotically accept their responsibility. People became motivated. Success!

It's easy for us Christians to also forget that liberty and responsibility go hand in hand! God gives us great freedom and amazing gifts. Christian stewardship says: use these gifts ... personal treasures, talents, and time, as well as earth's bountiful resources ... but use them responsibly and lovingly, as God would choose.

Look at Lady Liberty and remember freedom. Look at her pedestal and remember responsibility. Liberty stands on responsibility. It's true for every freedom in God's world.

Freedom and responsibility are both gifts from God. Let's show our appreciation to God by sharing and caring. Let's accept our freedom to give generously, and our responsibility to be good stewards of all God's wonderful gifts. 

Through Baptism, we are called to service in the church. We hear that call in the events and people that surround our lives. Our response varies according to the gifts we have received. Those who are truly successful in life respond by putting their gifts at the service of others. Whether we respond as single person or parent, priest or salesperson, our calling is to use the talents we have been blessed with not only for our good but to help others.



Little Idea ... BIG Results

Last April, a friend of mine named Al had an idea. “Why don’t we get some guys together on a Saturday morning and do some spring cleaning for one of the single mothers from our church?” He approached the Men’s Ministry for some help and twenty men, ages fourteen to sixty descended upon the home of a young mother who had recently lost her husband quite suddenly. They cleaned gutters, scraped the deck, raked, put in air an conditioner, swept the driveway, and cleaned the place up. Her six-year-old son was giddy with excitement.

Two weeks later, the pastor read aloud to the whole congregation a letter this single mother had written. One line in particular stood out. “Imagine the impact these twenty men made on my little boy when he looked out the window and saw them working around the house just because they cared. You have made an impression on him that will last a lifetime!”

The stewardship of giving time does not require a huge investment. Sometimes just a few hours given to someone else in need can reap incredible rewards, both in this lifetime and eternity. All it takes is a little idea. 

