

Stewardship

Are you doing your part? So much more can be achieved when everyone pulls together towards a goal. If everyone contributes something, then the total achievement will increase substantially with less effort from each person.

Alabama pastor, Thomas Lane Bush, tells a humorous story from his teen years, which carries a great lesson. Tom was helping an uncle harvest logs for a saw mill. After a rain one day, they started down a dirt road in a truck loaded with logs. Suddenly, the truck slipped off the road and became stuck in the muddy ditch. They knew that they needed help to get it back on the road.

Tom's uncle went to a farmhouse nearby and asked the farmer if he could help them. The farmer said he had a mule that he thought could do the job. A deal was made and the farmer was soon hitching a mule, which he called ol' Blue, to the truck. When all was ready, the farmer yelled, "Pull, Blue!" Blue pulled, but the truck did not move at all. The farmer yelled again, "Pull Blue! Pull Mack! Pull Maude!" Ol' Blue dug his hooves into the road, strained forward mightily, and the truck was soon out of the ditch and back on the road.

Tom and his uncle were relieved, but both were confused. "Why," the uncle asked the farmer, "did you call out the names of two other mules besides ol' Blue?"

Smiling, the farmer said, "Well, ol' Blue is blind and when he thought he was pulling alone he couldn't do the job. But when he thought Mack and Maude were pulling with him, he was



encouraged to pull all the more. So now your truck is out of the ditch."

Do you see the message in this story that has to do with stewardship? It is this. No one of us can meet all of the needs of our church. But when we know we are pulling together with others, we can accomplish whatever needs to be done. α



Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, ...but encouraging one another.

Hebrews 10:24



Open Hands

Jack is in our Men's Fellowship Group. He has worked for the local utility for many years and has done well financially. You'd never know it though because he is a little rough around the edges and always wears the same worn jeans and ruffled shirt. Time and again I've heard through the grapevine that whenever anyone from church was struggling financially, Jack was right there to help, usually anonymously. What he lacks in social graces is more than made up for by his generous heart and desire to help those who have fallen on hard times or are out of work.

The Bible says we are all part of one Body (Christ's), and that no one part is more important than another. We all need each other. Jack will never be asked to lead a ministry or sing a solo. He has no such aspirations. But when he hears of a family or individual in need, he's right there, never seeking anything in return. He knows God has blessed him with considerable wealth and he holds it with open hands.

What gift has God given you for the support and encouragement of your local church?

All God asks is open hands. 



"George, about that collection plate of yours..."



Thought You Wouldn't Ask

I was curious while visiting my neighbor, who had lived across our garden fence for many months. When she indicated she was a Christian, I wondered why she did not go to church.

I told my wife I was going to invite her to go with us the next time I saw her.


Soon we met over the garden fence and I said, "Would you like to go to church with us sometime?"

She smiled appreciatively, "I thought you'd never ask. Since I don't drive any more, I have no way to go places."

I offered, "It would be no problem for us to take you. We go right by your place."

"How about next Sunday? She quickly accepted.

She now attends services when her health allows. We have been privileged to minister to her in times of illness, and she has helped us in many ways. It is always a joy when she favors us with a loaf of freshly baked bread or a pot of home cooked beans.

I am encouraged daily to reach out to others when I remember the words my neighbor spoke, "I thought you would never ask?" 

"You shall open your hands wide to your brother, and to your needy in the land." (Deut. 15:11) In addition to faith, add brotherly kindness, love, self-control, knowledge, goodness and generosity to create a recipe for stewardship.




Through the Stained Glass...

Are you familiar with the saying, “Think outside the box?” It means to be creative, to think of something new. Of course, that’s easier said than done, just as stewardship is.

Often, we think of stewardship in terms of boxes. In many churches, boxes for donations (of food, school sup-

plies, books, winter clothing...the list goes on), appear regularly throughout the year. These are highly important outlets for giving. Many people depend on them.

Yet “box stewardship” shouldn’t stop there. Churchgoers need to be reminded of the boxes. If possible, the boxes should be decorated to attract more attention. (A Sunday school class could take on that job. It would remind them of the importance of giving.) The contents of the boxes usually need to be delivered. Questions should be asked regularly about what supplies are most urgently needed.

By thinking (and working) “outside the box,” we can make the donations inside the boxes more helpful to those in need. 

It Depends On You

Herman and Mary were riding in their new car. Mary said, “You know, honey, without me and my money, we wouldn’t be able to afford this great car.” Herman was silent.

Returning to their lovely home, Mary said, “You know, honey, without me and my money, we couldn’t afford to live in such a wonderful home.” Herman was silent. Mary continued, “Look at our gourmet kitchen, our family room with its entertainment center. Consider our elegant living room, the expensive furniture, the oriental rugs, the paintings, the crystal pieces. Without me or my money we couldn’t have all this.”

Finally, Herman spoke. “You know, dear,” he said, “the truth of the matter is...without you and your money, I wouldn’t be here either.”

What does that story have to do with any given church? The answer is “Ev-

erything!” The truth for us is that we wouldn’t be in this wonderful house of God without you and your money. You paid for this church. You paid for everything you see: the nave, chancel, altar, pulpit, pews, hymnals, cross and communion ware, and musical instruments. Everything on this site, all buildings and equipment, parking spaces and landscaping are all due to gifts from you.

You are also the source of all salaries and services the church provides. Missionaries and mission work, our seminaries and colleges depend on you. The church’s work on behalf of the homeless, the elderly, the children, youth and those in need of counseling depends on you.

The bottom line is that churches would not be able to exist or to serve Christ efficiently without you and the dedicated gifts that you give. Really, it all depends on you and your money.




God gave human beings superior minds...to be used to their fullest capacity in discovering God’s plan, in understanding self and others. We were also given bodies in which to accomplish God’s work. Use both to their fullest to inspire stewardship in your church and community.



“The truth for us is that we wouldn’t be in this wonderful house of God without you and your money.”

Importance of Stewardship

Stewardship plays an important role in the lives of people who seek to follow Christ. In particular, Christians must be stewards of their personal vocations, for it is these which show how, according to the circumstances of their individual lives, God wants them to cherish and serve a broad range of interests and concerns: life and health, along with their own intellectual and spiritual well-being and that of others; material goods and resources; the natural environment; the cultural heritage of humankind — indeed, the whole rich panoply of human goods, both those already realized and those whose realization depends upon

the present generation or upon generations yet to come. 



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