

Stewardship

Ministry Presentation to Parish, August 26, 2018

noun

1. *the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care; the conducting, supervising, or managing of something.*

Christian stewardship could be defined as the effective commitment or investment of human and material resources in participation with Christ in his love for others. -Richard Reidy

Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already.

– C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.

Stewardship is offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.

Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I believe..." as proof of that belief.

- Williams and McKibben in *Oriented Leadership*

Church involvement is the strongest single predictor of commitment. It behooves us to focus our Stewardship program on soliciting time and engagement.

Stewardship refers to our Time, Talents, and Treasures.

Foundations:

1. Everything we have is from God. (See Excerpt C on back side of handout).
2. We give out of love for God and thankfulness for His gifts. (See Excerpt A).
3. The relationship of a person and their money (and time, and talents) is fundamentally a spiritual matter. (A, B, and C).
4. A properly conceived stewardship effort in the Church can be an avenue to genuine spiritual growth. (A, B, and C).
5. We can begin to recover a soundly Orthodox theological base for our stewardship efforts. (B)
6. Stewardship is about giving from the gifts God has given us, and also about getting free of what binds us. (B).

Proposal/Next Steps:

1. Create a Stewardship Ministry Team, made up of people with a passion for seeing everyone using their gifts in the various ministries of the church.
2. Encourage parishioners to get involved in our church at every level.
3. Do yearly or bi-annual Stewardship Drives for time, talent and treasure--starting first with the Stewardship surveys--coordinated with teaching around stewardship from Fr. Nathan/clergy.
4. Stewardship Team can appeal to individuals personally about time, talents, and treasure: by phone, in person, and in people's homes (individually or in groups) as per Bill Marianas.

Helpful Excerpts and Resources:

From: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/stewardship>

<http://ww1.antiochian.org/stewardship-interview-giving-part-our-spiritual-life> (Ronald Nicola)

A. Christian stewardship involves the offering of time, talents, and resources to the Church in thanksgiving for the many blessings God has bestowed upon His children. We give not because the Church needs our time, our talents, or our resources, but because we need to offer these blessings in acknowledgement that these gifts are a blessing from God. We offer them to the Church in thanksgiving to Him for blessing our lives so many ways.

From: <https://oca.org/parish-ministry/stewardeducation/stewardship> (Article by Richard Reidy)

B. There are two primary points to be made. The first point is that stewardship always has to do with a Christian's task of giving away gifts that have already been given to him by God. This presupposes, of course, acceptance of the belief that all things are conferred on us by God. The second point is that stewardship always has to do with a Christian getting free of what binds him. In our culture, nothing binds us more than money - the symbol of material things. The first point has to do with turning to a new life; the latter with turning away from an old life. In other words, stewardship is intertwined with conversion. One has to be turned away from what binds him, and turned towards what frees him. This is the test of genuine conversion.

From: <https://www.goarch.org/departments/stewardship>,

C. Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed.

An Orthodox Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept the Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. Each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support the Parish and her Ministries, which in turn support the National Ministries of our Archdiocese, Metropolises, and institutions.

Effective stewardship ministry is not a single event or project. Rather, it is going out to our people wherever they are in their walk with Christ, listening to their concerns, helping them to realize their importance as branches of the True Vine and encouraging them to offer their gifts in His service. We use various resources to support our efforts, but unless we meet with our people personally, sincerely listen to their ideas and concerns, and share a vision for the future of the parish, our efforts will not reach their full potential.

From: <http://stewardshipcalling.com/> (Bill Marianes' website with loads of links)