

The Thirteenth Episcopal District's
146th Session of the West Tennessee Annual conference
Committee on Stewardship and Tithing

To: Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate, Dr. Susan J. Leath, Supervisor of Missions

Rev. Dr. C. Robert Finch Host Presiding Elder, Rev. Linda F. Thomas-Martin, Rev. Dr. Dave Adams and Rev Colleen P. Gibson, Presiding Elders of this great West Tennessee Conference.

Rev. Errol Thomas, Jr, M.D. Host Pastor and the members of the 146th Session of the West Tennessee Annual Conference.

The committee on Stewardship and Tithing beg leave to make the following report:

Just as it is our duty to help promote the gospel of the Good News to all who do not know it, we must be passionate about promoting basic Stewardship. We must encourage this same passion in our households and with our kinfolks! Ministry does start at home and spreads abroad.

As Christian believers, we must stress that tithing was not put into place for God's benefit—but for our benefit. If an individual has this mindset it may encourage them to start tithing. Our goal should to develop a lifestyle of stewardship - recognizing that everything is owned by God and he has given us dominion to manage it for his glory. We are called to balance our finances, time and talents to achieve ministry goals.

Just as everyone has different gifts and availability of time, we have different types of financial givers: sporadic givers, generous routine givers, and tithing members. In order to achieve the goals and vision of ministry, all types of givers are needed in the church.

Understanding the types of givers in your membership is an important ingredient to preparing the Church budget. Congregational giving comprises a large portion of projected income. We can rely on tithers to be consistent regardless of circumstances. However, it is hard to forecast support from the sporadic givers. When it comes to consistency, we can count on the routine givers and tithers even while we are not meeting in person, but the sporadic givers have fallen by the wayside impacting our monthly income. Loss of income effects the church the same way it effects the home.

Part of good Stewardship is maintaining a home budget. It is a great tool which guides us to live within our means. As members of the Household of Faith, it is our obligation to analyze and prioritize our income, time and talent for God and family. This is where Stewardship begins and should cause us to trust God more and our selves less. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

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Recommendations:

- Teach Stewardship & Tithes from the Pulpit, incorporate sessions during Church School and Bible Study.
 - Discuss the discipline required during Spiritual growth.
 - Contrast Spiritual growth with Stewardship discipline (e.g., maintaining our assets).
- All Pastor and Officers must lead by example and be willing to speak constructive criticism to your Peers.
 - Share, not brag about how and why you've been a consistent Giver.
 - Discuss the discipline it takes to make God a line item in your budget.
- Use End of Year Charitable contribution statement as a means to discuss Stewardship and encourage Members.
 - November and December are good months to conduct financial workshops
 - Personal growth is another workshop to outline what Stewardship looks like.
- Direct members to on-line giving opportunities.
 - Website
 - Giving Apps (Givelify, Venmo, Cash App and others)
- General Communication (show members you care; its about how we present the topic)
 - Following up with Members is basic stewardship for Clergy & Officers.
 - Monitor your weekly finance & absentee report and selectively target members to query.
 - Most members are reluctant to share personal information especially financial matters with Church leaders. Therefore, building & nurturing relationships with confidentiality will increase opportunity to discuss these topics.
 - Our Churches should know various local resources which can direct needed members to local Agencies for support.
 - Thank you notes to visitors and first time Givers.
 - Direct various Ministries to correspond with Members.

Humbly submitted, The committee on Stewardship and Tithing

The Reverend David Yancy, II Chair;

The Reverend Eugene Brooks, Sr;

The Reverend Annie Garvin

Sister Deborah Lofties

Brother Nathaniel Lynn

Sister Tina Sherrod

The Reverend Errol M. Thomas, Jr. MD

Brother Samuel James

Sister Carrie Wellington

Brother Thomas Rice

Sister Ella M. Standberry