

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP  
118<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EAST TENNESSEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
JEFFREY N. LEATH, PRESIDING BISHOP  
SUSAN J. LEATH, MD; SUPERVISOR, WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
REVEREND DR. EVA SETTLES; HOST PRESIDING ELDER, CHATTANOOGA-KNOXVILLE  
DISTRICT  
REVEREND DR. TERENCE L. MAYES, SR.; ASSOCIATE PRESIDING ELDER, FAYETTEVILLE-  
PULASKI DISTRICT  
REVEREND KENNETH LOVE, HOST PASTOR

Someone said, "Stewardship is not about raising money; its about raising Christians who willingly trust God." "Money is so intimately related to the possessor, that we cannot give money without giving ourselves."

We have learned over the past few years that God has entrusted us to manage his creation. Therefore, we are accountable to God for what we do and with what he has entrusted to u Every person who exists is a steward. Some are good stewards-caring, careful, attentive, compassionate, thoughtful, committed, and generous. On the other hand, some are poor stewards- careless, wasteful, thoughtless, inconsiderate, self-centered and hurtful. (Rusboldt)

Through Christ we become joint heirs of God the Father- that is to say, full members of God's family. We don't just work for God. We are brought into God's household and entrusted with God's priceless mysteries.

Paul said, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful...." (1 Corinthians 4:1, 2)

Jesus said, in the Parable of the Unjust Steward,

"Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much. So, if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will trust you with what is genuine? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Luke 16:10-13)

Tithing is one aspect of Christian Stewardship. The tithe is the tenth part of agricultural produce or personal income set apart as an offering to God or for works of mercy, or the same amount regarded as an obligation or tax for the support of the church, priesthood, or the like.

Concerning our tithes and offering, Paul said,

The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart- not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work. As it is written:

He distributed freely; he gave to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.

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As God's stewards, we are an extension of His righteousness through Jesus Christ. One author said,

"A starting place is the recognition that God has invited us to be responsible for our lives and resources. We are not likely to manage well unless we acknowledge that we are God's managers. We are not likely to exercise good stewardship unless we recognize that we are God's stewards." (Mather)

Humbly Submitted,

The Committee on Stewardship and Tithing

The Reverends Coleman March, Andrea Brabson, Ernest Latham and Judge John McClarty,  
Sisters JoAnne Gaunt, Laverne Cook, and Renee McClure