

Tuesday, March 9

Stewardship Principle

Readings: Psalm 39; Ezekiel 17:1-10; Romans 2:12-16

8

Contribute regularly

means practicing our stewardship on a daily basis. By doing so this becomes a lifestyle. Paul instructs us:

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn.”  
1 Corinthians 16:2

Prayer: *O God, I resolve to put You first in my life. I recognize that You have blessed me with all that I have and all that I am. As your steward, I resolve to sacrifice when necessary but always to do so out of a spirit of sincere love, just as your Son, Jesus, did for me.*

*I humbly accept the challenge to share from my means rather than from my excess. I recognize that being a good steward is nothing more than being truly Christian.*

*Dear God, I resolve, to be generous with my time, talent and treasure, giving in proportion to the gifts I have been given. I commit myself to taking care of my body and all of creation. I know there will be times when I will fall to be a good steward, but I pledge to keep on trying. I will confidently live each day with a spirit of true peace and joy in knowing that I am doing your will. Amen.<sup>37</sup>*

Focal Verse: “For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified.” Romans 12:13

Reflection: Biblical Advice for Cheerful Givers

We've been told this since our days in Sunday school: We want to give and we need to give gladly. A spirit of generosity isn't enough to guide us in our decisions. What else does Scripture have to say on the subject?

Three kinds of financial giving are mentioned in the Bible: offerings, tithes and alms. Understanding what they mean helps us achieve a thoughtful, balanced plan for our cheerful giving.

**Offerings, Tithing & Alms** The faith practice of making a regular financial offering to your congregation is grounded in a "first fruits" biblical principle. Your generosity is not an afterthought; it's part of your day-in and day-out joyful response as a child of God.

Tithing includes all undesignated giving and supports local ministries and outreach. Your congregation then shares a portion of your offering -- mission support -- with your synod and the churchwide expression. Offerings refer to giving that is above and beyond, and never in place of, your commitment to regular congregational giving, which many Christians talk about as a tithe.

Alms are our compassionate, heartfelt response to the people Jesus mentioned in Matthew 25: those "least" of our sisters and brothers who are "less" than we in circumstance only and always our equal in their humanity. This is our most personal and spontaneous kind of giving in response to people in need.<sup>38</sup>

What do you hear?  
How does it make you feel?  
Toward what are you being drawn?  
What do you sense you should do?

<sup>37</sup> Marlaina Doidge, Associate in Ministry, Christ Lutheran Church, Glencoe MN

<sup>38</sup> ELCA, Stories of Faith in Action, © 2009, p. 7.