

# Stewardship Conversation Ten

## THE ISSUE: Stewardship and Life Together

St. John writes, “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)

As God’s stewards we understand that the fellowship that God establishes with us in Christ expresses itself in the fellowship we have with one another. This horizontal relationship is our stewardship. It focuses on the needs of our neighbor.

LCMS President Matthew Harrison writes concerning St. Paul’s collection for Jerusalem recorded in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, “This collection is a visible and tangible expression of another reality of the Church, namely, fellowship. In fact, St. Paul calls the collection for the poor a *koinonia*, a ‘fellowship’ or ‘mutual participation.’...what is ‘fellowship’ (*koinonia*)? John’s first Epistle (1 John 1:3, 6-7) shows us that this fellowship is vertical (with the Lord), then horizontal (with fellow believers)...The apostle John is careful to note these two facets of the one fellowship; the vertical is not separated from the horizontal. The fellowship with the Lord is first, and it creates the relationship among the saints...A relationship with God the Father without a relationship with others in fellowship is impossible. A denial of love to a brother or sister is a denial of fellowship in the Lord (1 John 3:15-17). The Lord creates fellowship by His Gospel of grace (Philippians 1:7). It is a fellowship in the Spirit (Philippians 2:1). It is created by fellowship or participation (*koinonia*) in the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16)” (pages 143-144).

## Talking It Over

- Dr. Albert B. Collver writes in the January 2011 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, “The word for Life Together occurs less in the New Testament than either the word for Witness or Mercy. Life Together (*koinonia*) is somewhat abstract in Greek...The word means ‘fellowship’ or ‘participation.’” Collver goes on to say that the Christian has fellowship with Jesus because of His work on the cross. The Christian has fellowship in receiving the true body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. The Church has fellowship with herself and with individual members who have been made one body in Christ. How is this fellowship created and how is it demonstrated?
- President Harrison writes, “This fellowship is vertical.” Someone has said, “The biggest stewardship challenge I have is managing the relationship God has established with me in Christ.” How does one steward this relationship?
- President Harrison writes, “This fellowship is horizontal.” What responsibilities do I have to steward the relationships I have at home, at work, at church, and in the community?
- How is the offering a visible and tangible expression of fellowship?
- What does James 2:15-17 have to say about stewardship and Life Together?

## Putting It Into Practice

How are we forming faithful stewards for Life Together in our congregation?

## Digging Deeper

President Matthew Harrison writes in *Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action*, “When the *koinonia* we have with the Father no longer manifests itself in brotherly love, we risk the denial of that *koinonia*, that fellowship, with the ‘Father of mercy’ (1 John 1:6ff.; 3:10; 3:16-18; 4:11-21)” (page 147).

