

Stewardship Conversation Five

THE ISSUE: Congregational Stewardship

The congregation has a vital role in teaching and modeling Christian stewardship. Every congregation has the responsibility to instruct the individual member in Christian stewardship as well as to practice good stewardship as it manages the resources God has entrusted to it.

“The great chapters in the New Testament which reveal how the church is built by God affirm that each member, or ‘living stone,’ in the structure has been given life to share with all the others; that each is to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit both to keep his own life going and to make a contribution to all the others (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). The strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak and please their neighbor for his good and edification as Christ pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:1-3).

The immature Christian will tend to use the church, enjoy the fellowship, and accept the blessings it affords with little or no thought of his responsibility to others...The mature Christian will see his membership in the church as involving him not only in a fellowship of privilege but also in a fellowship of responsibility.

Corporate action at one point in the church makes possible many individual acts of Christian service at other points. What God gives the church to do is a corporate task, and what Christians in one congregation or group of congregations or a synod are led by God to undertake becomes the corporate decision and the common objective of the church as Christians ‘provoke one another to good works’ and join in ‘the fellowship of the ministering to saints.’”

-Harry G. Coiner, *The Secret of God's Plan: Guidelines for a Theology of Stewardship*.

Talking It Over

- What is the goal or purpose of the stewardship board/committee in your congregation?
- How does it compare to this goal: The goal of stewardship ministry is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the resources God has entrusted to them?
- What do you suppose Coiner means by a “fellowship of privilege” and a “fellowship of responsibility.”
- How does a Christian congregation model faithful stewardship corporately for individual members?
- What are the responsibilities of the Christian as a priest of God to fellow members in Christ's church?
- What is a congregation's privilege and responsibility when it comes to the church at large (district and synod)?

Putting It Into Practice

Examine the stewardship culture of the congregation. (Helps are online at faithaflame.lcms.org) What elements of the culture need to be adjusted or changed?

Digging Deeper

Read Harry Coiner's *The Secret of God's Plan*. It can be found online at faithaflame.lcms.org under “Stewardship Book Resources.”

