



The Good Steward

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Published to help stimulate a better understanding of our need to
give

Stewardship – Living It!

What kind of a neighbor are you? Are you friendly – do you visit over the shrubs or fence, like Tim, the Tool Man Taylor? Do you share extra vegetables or fruit or maybe those extra brownies that the company didn't eat? Do you even know your neighbors by name?

I've had new neighbors on the East side of my house for almost a year. I know their last names and we always wave. But I'm sure I wouldn't recognize them if I met them uptown.

Now I have new neighbors on the West side of me. I've had good intentions of going over with a plate of cookies (homemade, of course) but that has not happened.

What does this have to do with stewardship? Well, stewardship is not all about money. Stewardship is about everything we own, our time, and our talent (whether it is to bake cookies or to grow a garden, etc).

My parents were good stewards. My dad helped neighbors or friends without expecting to get paid. When a member of our parish (St. Joe's in Red Lake Falls) died, mom would make a hot dish or a pie or bars and bring it to the family. She knew they would need it for the extra people who would be around for the funeral.

If someone was sick, Mom would send prayers in a get-well card.

If the altar boys (it was only boys in those days) cassocks or surplices needed laundering or ironing, Mom volunteered to help.

When it was time for the church dinner or bazaar, there was no question as to whether or not our family would donate something. The only questions were what to bring and how much to bring. The other question to answer was, "What shift would you like to work?" And it wasn't just mom and dad who worked. We kids had jobs, too, as soon as we were old enough. I remember working in the candy booth or at the cake walk or in the country store. I remember waitressing – pouring coffee or water or helping families with little ones bring the plates of food to their table.

I never heard the word stewardship when I was growing up. I saw it and lived it with my family. And now I need to remember and continue to live it as an example to my children and grandchildren.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for your clear example of what it is to be a good steward.

Jean LaJesse, Stewardship Mgr., Diocese of Crookston

Stewardship Office
Diocese of Crookston
PO Box 610
Crookston, MN 56716

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Offering a Sacrifice! The pastor explained the meaning of offering and sacrifice, and then directed the ushers to get ready for the offering, except it was not going to be an ordinary offering. People were invited to bodily come forward up to the stairs leading to the platform, and place something of value, but not money, on the stairs, for the offering that day.

At first, people came forth tentatively and with some hesitation. One brought up a blanket, another brought a Bible, and yet another gave a coat. One fellow, an avid golfer, went out to the parking lot to his car to get the new set of golf clubs that he had just bought. When he brought the set of clubs up to the stairs, a spirit of generosity spread through the congregation like wildfire. People began to get up and bring anything they had with them to deposit on the stairs.

One fellow, deeply moved by the gift of golf clubs, didn't have anything with him. As he thought about what he might give as an offering, he had what seemed to him a hilarious thought. He went out to his car and brought in a spare tire he had in the trunk. As he rolled it up the aisle to lean against the stairs, another man came up and examined the tire, then went over and whispered in the pastor's ear. The pastor whispered back, and then the man rolled the tire back down the aisle to his seat.

When the offering was finished and the stairs were full of the various items that had been brought forth, the pastor picked up the microphone and addressed the congregation. The pastor relayed what the man had whispered in his ear: the man had had a flat tire earlier in the day. He could not afford to buy a new tire, so he prayed to God to bring him one. He had gotten a ride with a friend to church that night. When he saw the tire being rolled up to the stairs, he went over and looked at the model number on it. He couldn't believe it. It was the exact tire he needed.

The pastor suggested he take it home with him and the man therefore rolled the tire down the aisle to his seat. The pastor concluded: "Giving can be infectious, and you never know which of your gifts people will need." Used with permission by Parish Publishing LLC, New Canaan CT 06840

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Give First – Manage the Rest - If God comes first in our lives, then giving to God should also come first. The person who says, "After I pay all my bills I can't afford to give," may be telling the truth. But these people have made a grave error. They have put the cart before the horse! None of us could afford to give with what's left. Putting first things first means giving first and then managing the rest of our income in a way by which we will still pay all our bills. And this is easier than we may think. Used with permission by Parish Publishing LLC, New Canaan CT 06840