

The Importance of a Stewardship *Commitment*

Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce – Proverbs 3:9.

The Bible says a great deal about stewardship, as it is a fundamental part of each individual's personal relationship with God. The Bible teaches that those who faithfully practice stewardship of all that God provides to them should give: through the church (*Malachi 3:10*); liberally (*Luke 6:38*); sacrificially (*2 Corinthians 8:1-4*); cheerfully (*2 Corinthians 9:7*); and regularly (*1 Corinthians 16:2*). The Bible also says there is great joy in giving to God.

Following these principles requires a ***commitment*** to stewardship, which poses both a challenge to be steadfast and an opportunity to further develop one's relationship with God. And once made, that ***commitment*** requires a specific plan on how to fulfill it.

The giving of ***first fruits*** is referred to many times in the Bible, and offers a simple, yet highly effective approach to stewardship planning. It has its roots in the practice that farmers had to set aside the first "fruits" of their harvest for God. Once a person makes a ***commitment*** to practice faithful stewardship based on ***first fruits*** giving, their offerings to the Lord are deemed as essential as all other routine financial obligations, such as rent, car payments, and other basic needs.

This practice encourages trust that once a faithful ***commitment*** is made, God will provide for our needs. By developing a giving plan based on ***first fruits***, an individual responds to God's love by prioritizing their relationship with God. Because of their faith and gratitude to God, they see giving to God through the Church as a priority, not merely an option to be fulfilled with whatever resources may be left over.

Many of our congregants have accepted ***first fruits*** as a core element of their stewardship planning. One way to do this is to take advantage of the electronic giving options available. By making a plan to debit directly from their bank account on a prescribed, scheduled basis, congregants use electronic giving to practice ***first fruits*** as they meet their stewardship ***commitments***. Further information on this is available through the LCC church office.

Biblical Tenets of Stewardship

Give Through the Church

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. – Malachi 3:10.

Give Liberally

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. – Luke 6:38.

Give Sacrificially

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ²for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints. – 2 Corinthians 8:1-4.

Give Cheerfully

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. – 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Give Regularly

On the first day of each week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. – 1 Corinthians 16:2.