

## Stewardship

By Santiago Lange

When the word *stewardship* is mentioned, we likely think of our monetary donations to the church, including giving offerings in worship services. This form of stewardship is both valuable and necessary for the church to fulfill its calling. However, biblical stewardship entails much more than our regular donations to the church. As the old saying goes, “money isn’t everything.”



The basis of stewardship in the Bible is the understanding that God owns all the resources in the universe. In his grace, he allows us to manage some of these resources. We usually think of ourselves as the owners of our homes, our children, our talents, our money, etc. However, it would be more accurate to think of ourselves as “managers” of these things and that is what the idea of stewardship connotes. We are called by God to be stewards of things that belong to God.

What are some of the things God calls us to “manage” properly? In Ephesians 5:16 (ESV), God calls us to manage our time (and do so with wisdom). We are to make the most out of every opportunity. We live in a fast-paced society where keeping the right priorities is increasingly difficult. There are many things competing for our time these days: work, meals, studies, shopping, TV, sports, reading, the list goes on. It’s possible to allow the many cares of this world to get in the way of spiritual things. It’s not wrong to look after physical pursuits, but a Christian needs to seek *first* the kingdom of God, to orient their thinking, hopes, dreams and aspirations on the things that are *above*, thus putting God first in their life. When they do that, all the other things fall into place in proper order of priority.

God has called us to be a part of a community of believers. There is no such thing as an “independent Christian.” We *need* one another! Iron can sharpen iron only when rubbing together. God reveals himself to us in a number of ways. A primary way is through the fellowship of believers. We should eagerly look forward to our time together. Do we give God the appropriate portion in our lives? Or does God just get the leftovers?

Being good stewards of the time God has given us means thinking how we can best use our time, not only for ourselves, but to serve Christ and help other people. We know the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). We all have received gifts from God for the edification of the church and the world around us. Let’s encourage each other to be actively and productively involved in our congregations and communities while doing everything decently and in order.

Never underestimate God. No congregation and no person is so small that it cannot be reached and led by the Holy Spirit. We all are stewards of God’s truth. We have been entrusted

with the gospel message! Christ is speaking to the world through his church. What an awesome privilege and a great responsibility! This is not the time to slow down or take a break.

Christians often refer to “becoming Christ-like.” While it is not wrong to use that expression, we must realize that we will never become exactly like Jesus in this lifetime. Rather than getting involved in a legalistic system of religion that measures success in terms of rules and regulations, we want our lives to be motivated and permeated by God’s love and grace. As faithful stewards of the resources that God has given us to manage, we want to give Jesus Christ our hearts, our minds and our lives. □