

Session and Stewardship

Session Starter #21

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Prayer

God of grace, you have blessed the church with a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From your hands we receive an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. With indescribable joy and deep humility we accept this gift that fills us with confidence to serve Jesus Christ in all of life. Bless us as we assemble in his holy name. Amen.

Introduction

The session is responsible for all aspects of stewardship and mission, both spiritual and material, within the congregation.

Book of Forms, 113

Scripture

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

1 Peter 4:10

A Brief Commentary

Peter's letter is addressed to Christians who had been exiled and scattered to the four winds. Peter prays they might be blessed with abundant grace and peace but also recognizes the often challenging reality of walking faithfully with Christ Jesus. Peter urges believers to abandon selfish, destructive lifestyles and to embrace the generosity of God's love. In this context, he calls them to recognize, with gratitude, the myriad gifts God places in their hearts and hands and to use them wisely.

Reflection

What is stewardship?

In the May 2010 issue of the *Presbyterian Record*, The Rev. Dr. Herb Gale wrote, "One of the best definitions I have ever heard of stewardship is also the shortest: 'Stewardship is organizing our life so that we can give it away'" (p. 32). There is something profoundly appealing and challenging in this statement. It is certainly worth pondering.

In the church, we often think of stewardship as the

three T's: time, talent and treasure. Stewardship is much more than this. For example, surely stewardship has to do with how we care for the environment, being good stewards of the garden in which God has placed us.

For the purpose of this brief reflection, however, we'll stick with the three T's. Sometimes we are stingy with these precious gifts and claim them as our own. We talk about how we use our time; we measure our talents against those of others; we think a lot about how we spend and save our money. Sometimes we use these gifts selfishly rather than generously. But these gifts are only ours because God has entrusted them to our care. And we have them in order to serve one another effectively and by God's grace.



Discussion

1. **Time:** How can we encourage people to commit time to the service of Christ? Do we too readily ask the same reliable pillars to lead ministries? Do we remember to invite others to take part?
2. **Talent:** How well do we know our congregation? Are there ways that we can uncover the gifts, skills and talents of our congregation that may be hidden behind the timidity or humility of our members?
3. **Treasure:** When there are money needs in the congregation, do we automatically expect the board or finance committee to find solutions, or do we offer leadership and support?