



STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE

"Like good stewards of the Grace of God, Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received"
(1 Peter 4:10).

a statement on
Christian Stewardship
for
Dayspring Presbyterian Church

adopted by
the Stewardship Committee,
the Session,
and the Board of Managers

March 1, 2015

Dear Friends:

This booklet has been approved by the Stewardship Committee, the Session and the Board of Managers of Dayspring Presbyterian Church and is offered to the members and adherents of our congregation to make clear what we see as the meaning of being “faithful stewards.” We believe this booklet is based on sound Biblical principles and that it will serve to give some direction and clarification of any questions that you might have about stewardship.



What we would like to achieve in this booklet, is to point out how we as believers can respond to the goodness of God by being generous. There is an adage that says “generosity breeds generosity” and when people become generous new doors and possibilities open up in the work of the church in the world we live in. If you have any questions after reading this booklet, please ask me, a member of the Stewardship Committee, the Session, or the Board of Managers. We would love to serve you.

In Christ's Service,
The Rev. Dr. Heinrich Grosskopf

We give Thee but Thine own,

The word “stewardship” is frequently bandied about in church circles, but often with little understanding of what it means. The term, “stewardship,” comes from the Biblical concept of “steward.” In Biblical usage, a steward is a person who manages the affairs of a household for the owner. It is a position of trust and responsibility. When Pharaoh made Joseph second in command in Egypt “*You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.*” (Genesis 41:40), Pharaoh was in effect making Joseph his chief steward, a position of tremendous trust and responsibility.



Similarly, the Bible teaches that each one of us is a steward of God's creation. When God created us male and female and gave us “*dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth*” (Gen. 1:28), God was making us stewards of creation. The Psalmist tells us “*the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it*” (Psalm 24:1). This means that everything, including our own self, belongs to God. All that we have and are is a gift from God (i.e., grace) and is entrusted to our care. As stewards of God's grace we are accountable to God for what we do with

these gifts.

From this perspective, stewardship covers a multitude of areas and responsibilities; indeed, stewardship has to do with the responsible use of all of life. How we care for our world is a stewardship question. If we misuse our natural resources and pollute the air and water, we are failing to be good stewards. How we care for our bodies is a stewardship question. If we abuse our bodies with drugs or alcohol or improper diet and exercise, we are failing to be good stewards. How we use our time is a stewardship question. If we live harried lives dominated by the clock, we are failing to be good stewards.

How we care for our children, how we use our talents, how we make and spend and save our money -- all of these are stewardship issues. Actually, to talk about “our world,” “our bodies,” “our time,” etc. is misleading, for as we have already noted, everything, including ourselves, belongs to God. We are not owners but stewards (i.e., caretakers) of what God has entrusted to our oversight. As an old hymn declares:

*Whate'er the gift may be,
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee*



One dimension of stewardship is that of **Talent**. Stewardship of talent speaks directly to the differences between people. People are both born with and throughout life develop different abilities and capabilities. God recognizes this and expects that each person bring forth value from his or her life in proportion to what he or she has been given to work with. God recognizes that we aren't all equal in talent, so God doesn't require equal results. What God requires is equal effort in the use of our talents. There is a quote that fits this situation well: *"My life is God's gift to me. What I do with it is my gift to God."* In exercising our talents we increase them and in increasing them we enhance the lives of those around us. This is the important point: **We exercise our talents not for ourselves, but for others. It is in this exercise of talents for others that we receive benefit ourselves from our talents.**

A second and equally important dimension of stewardship is the stewardship of **Time**. We each have an unknown amount of time that is given to us. The Christian steward is aware of the importance of time and uses it wisely and with care in the service of God. For the Christian, there is no such thing as "killing time". Time is a gift that has to be used wisely.



A third dimension of stewardship is **Treasure** or **Financial Stewardship**. This focus is warranted because of the importance that our culture places on money and that our Lord Himself placed on money. Jesus knew, as do we, that what we do with our money reflects our priorities and commitments.



*For where your **treasure** is, there your heart will be also.* (Matthew 6:21)

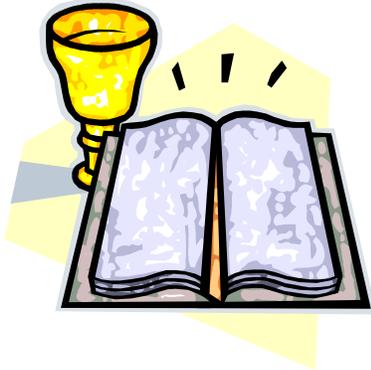
Jesus talked much about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. In the gospels, an amazing one out of ten verses (288 of the total of about 2,880 verses) deal directly with the subject of money. The Bible (Old and New Testaments) offers 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.
[Source: Howard L. Dayton, Jr]

And so, considering the important place that money plays in our lives and in Scripture, it is only right that we should give appropriate attention to financial stewardship. It is important to remember, however, that stewardship has to do with all of life, not just money.

SOME PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR GIVING TIME, TALENT & TREASURE

Each is discussed in detail below.

1. Give in response to God's grace, not to earn God's grace.
2. Giving is a symbolic act of worship that expresses the giving of our whole self.
3. Give intentionally and of your own free will.
4. Give the "first fruits" not the "leftovers" of your income.
5. Give regularly.
6. Give proportionally
7. Give cheerfully.



1. Give in response to God's grace, not to earn God's grace.

This is certainly the most important guideline for giving. Our human tendency is to think that we must somehow earn God's approval and acceptance, and we mistakenly believe that giving to the church is one way to do this. However, the Bible teaches us that there is no way to earn God's love (it wouldn't be "grace" if we could earn it). Rather, God's love is seen in that it was "*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). Our giving is an expression of gratitude for what God has done for us. Gratitude in response to God's grace, not guilt or duty, is the proper motivation for our giving of Time, Talent and Treasure.

2. Giving is a symbolic act of worship that expresses the giving of our whole self.

A Biblical view of stewardship will focus on the primary matter of aligning the heart with Jesus Christ. As Jesus taught, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). When we give of our **Time, Talent and Treasure**, we are giving as a practical expression of our personal commitment to Jesus Christ and His way of self-giving love.

3. Give intentionally and of your own free will.

In his second letter to the Christians in Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*Each of you must give as you have made up your own mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion*" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Paul was laying down an important principle for giving which has two implications: (1) our giving should be intentional, not haphazard. After prayerful consideration, we need to make our own decision as to what we will give. (2) We should give freely, not because we have been manipulated by a false sense of guilt or duty. Please know that the purpose of this booklet is not to lay a guilt trip on the reader, but to help the members and adherents of Dayspring to experience a deeper Christian understanding about stewardship of our **Time, Talent and Treasure**.

4. Give the "first fruits" not the "leftovers" of your income.

Proverbs 3:9 declares: "*Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.*" The ancient Israelites were instructed to dedicate to the Lord their "first fruits" (i.e., the first fruits of their harvest to ripen) as they trusted in the promise that the Lord will continue to provide. Most of us today are not farmers but the ancient principle still holds: God calls us, as an expression of our trust in God's providential care, to give the first fruits of our income, not what is left over after we have paid our other bills and expenses. Practice this principle of setting a priority on giving of your **Time and Talent and Treasure** and see if it does not bear a rich harvest of God's blessings in your own life.

5. Give regularly.

On the front of our weekly offering envelopes, we read, "*All things come of Thee O Lord, and of*

Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14). Whether we give of our **Treasury** weekly or bi-weekly or monthly, it is important that giving to God's work becomes a regular part of our regular Christian discipline. Regularity in the giving of our **Time and Talent** is also important!

6. Give proportionally.

In 1 Corinthians 16:2 (CEV), Paul says "*That is, each Sunday each of you must put aside part of what you have earned*". We notice as well that Paul says that we are to give of our **Treasury** "*as God has prospered*" us. Here Paul introduces the idea of proportional giving (i.e., giving a percentage of what God has given us). Paul re-iterates this principle in his second letter to the Corinthians when he writes: "*For if eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has -- not according to what one does not have*" (2 Cor. 8:12). Our giving to the church and its ministry and our personal participation in that ministry through the offering of our **Time and Talent**, is not intended to be a burden on us; rather, we give as a way of sharing some of our abundance as God has prospered us.



The members of the Stewardship Committee, the Board and the Session of Dayspring encourage each member and adherent of our congregation to become a Proportional Giver. What this means is that each of us, in accordance with the guidelines listed in this booklet: (a) covenant with God to give a certain percentage of our **Time, Talent and Treasure** to God's work; and (b) commit ourselves to reviewing that covenant on a periodic basis (i.e., once a year) with the goal of increasing that percentage as we seek to become more faithful stewards of God's grace.

7. Give cheerfully.

Once again we quote from Paul: "*God loves a cheerful giver*" (2 Cor. 9:7). We often talk about giving until it hurts. Well, Paul suggests instead that we give until it feels good. Paul knew from his own experience that investing in God's Kingdom was a joyous adventure in faith, not a burdensome duty. As Jesus himself once said, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35).



Thomas Carlyle, the poet, knew the truth of Jesus' words. Carlyle tells how, when he was a boy, a beggar came to the door. His parents were out, so he was at home alone. On an impulse, he broke into his piggy bank and gave the beggar all he had. Looking back on that incident, Carlyle remarked, "Never before or since have I known such sheer happiness as came to me at that moment." Carlyle discovered what it meant to give until it felt good. May we discover that joy too.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TREASURY

Question: What about tithing?

Answer: Tithing is the practice of giving 10% of one's income for sacred purposes. The Old Testament writings include many commands to the people to present a tithe of their produce to the Lord. In the New Testament, tithing is never commanded of God's people. Jesus himself condemned tithing when it led to self-righteousness (c.f. Luke 18:9-14). Zaccheus gave more than half of his savings away after he had been touched by Jesus' love (Luke 19:8), and the early Christians went far beyond tithing when they gave everything they owned to the church to be used for the common good (c.f. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-25). The New Testament writers do not lay down any laws about giving but challenge us to learn to give with the same whole-hearted generosity that we see in Jesus.

Question: What will be my reward for giving?

Answer: When we give to the church, we do not seek any "reward" in the sense of a financial return on our investment. But we can expect to experience a deeper joy in sharing in Christ's mission and a deeper communion with God as we grow in grace.

Question: What about other charities?

Answer: We encourage you to give to charities outside of Dayspring Church. The church exists for the sake of the larger community and world and there are many charities carrying out Christ's mission to the world.

Question: Can I give on a Pre-authorized Payment in the same way I pay my bills?

Answer: You may already enjoy the convenience of pre-authorized payment programs for certain household payments and charitable donations. The same convenience is available for your givings to Dayspring through monthly withdrawals from a designated bank account. The pre-authorized payment program does not replace any of the existing Stewardship programs in our congregation. Rather, it provides an additional method by which you may contribute to Dayspring and the larger church and its many activities. The plan operates in exactly the same way as other pre-authorized payments such as those for utilities, insurance plans, and mortgages.

The program is voluntary and entirely confidential. It is administered in our congregation through the envelope secretary in the same way as the weekly envelope givings. Withdrawals will occur once a month on the 20th of each month. If you would like to join the plan, please contact the church office at (780) 435-3111 and further information will be sent to you.

Question: Where does the money I give to Dayspring Church go?

Answer: See the following section.

THE USE OF OFFERING ENVELOPES

Dayspring Church provides and encourages the use of Weekly Offering Envelopes so you can contribute regularly to the work and ministry of Dayspring and the larger church. As the picture below shows, the envelope is divided into sections that allow donors to indicate how they want their money to be spent.

Envelope Number	Offering Date	Envelope Number
<p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">Dayspring Presbyterian Church</p> <p>DAYSPRING BUDGET \$ _____</p> <p>PRESBYTERIANS SHARING \$ _____</p> <p>PRESB WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT \$ _____</p> <p>OTHER (Please Specify) \$ _____</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(Please Specify)..... \$ _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL \$ _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em; color: #808080;"><i>"All things come of Thee O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee."</i></p>		

Dayspring Budget: Monies specified on this line of the envelope go to the cost of running Dayspring's local ministries (i.e. salaries, office expenses, utilities, Christian Education, etc.) and to pay our fair share of the cost of operating Presbytery, Synod, Synod Camp, and the U of Alberta Chaplaincy.. About 65% of our total giving is needed for the "Dayspring Budget."

Presbyterians Sharing: Monies specified on this line pay for the work and ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (i.e. mission work in Canada and Overseas, theological colleges, program development and administrative expenses, etc.).

Presb(byterian) World Service & Development: Monies specified on this line go to **PWS&D** - the worldwide emergency relief and development agency for the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Other: "Other" monies go to various causes/projects that you specify on your envelope, i.e., special appeals, local or national projects, etc.

NOTES

1. Undesignated funds put in the offering envelopes automatically go to the congregational budget unless otherwise indicated in the invitation to give our offerings.
2. It must be emphasized that all givings to the church are confidential (i.e., between you and the Lord). Only Dayspring's envelope secretary keeps track of the amounts given - so that a receipt can be provided for income tax purposes.
3. Those who give to the church through the offering envelopes or through the Pre-Authorized Payment program will receive quarterly statements as well as a year-end statement for income tax purposes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We hope you have found this booklet informative and helpful. For more information please contact a member of Stewardship Committee, the Session, or the Board of Managers. If you're not sure who to contact, please call the church office at (780) 435-3111.

May God give all of us the grace we need to become more faithful stewards so that our lives might more and more reflect the generosity of Christ who *"though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9).

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. Romans 12:4-6a - (NLT)

