

Stewardship and Tithing
117th Session of the East Tennessee Annual Conference
September 21-24, 2016
Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate
The Reverend Dr. Terrence L. Mayes, Presiding Elder
The Charles Holsey, Jr. , Host Pastor
St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, TN

It has been said that the way a Christian approaches tithing is a reflection of their inner commitment to God. The word of God tells us in 2 Cor. 9:6-8;

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

The importance of giving to God is that it reminds us of who He is, who we are, and what our relationship should be to the things He has allowed us to manage in His name. Giving must be done in love, with a thankful and willing heart, all the time recognizing God as the owner of everything. (Burkett, p. 21)

The fundamental principle of biblical stewardship is that God owns everything. We are managers and administrators acting on his behalf.

¹⁷ You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” ¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today. (Deut. 8:17-18)

In the ancient world, stewardship was a key component of commerce. Almost every business concern had a steward who served like an ancient chief operating officer, running the daily affairs of the master of the house. Simply put, a steward was someone entrusted with the management of someone else's affairs. (Peel, 2008)

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We are managers of God's affairs. God created the heavens and the earth. The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Therefore, we should pay attention to the attitude in which we give.

Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38)

Remember that giving should be an outward, material expression of the deep spiritual commitment, an indication of a willing and obedient heart. God loves a cheerful giver. If God has granted us a special gift of giving, we may also be especially sensitive to the needs of others. On the other hand, if we are only giving for the express purpose of receiving, then we are giving for the wrong reason. This does not please God. Giving to impress others is also a wrong reason to give.

There will come a day when we will give an account of our stewardship. We want to hear the Lord say,

.... Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matthew 25:21)

Humbly Submitted,

The Committee on Stewardship and Tithing;

The Reverends Coleman March, Andrea Brabson, and Ernest Latham, Sisters Jessica Southern, Bettye Jo Bryson, and Laverne Cook

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References

Burkett, L. (1998). Giving & tithing includes serving and stewardship. Chicago, IL:
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