



StewardCAST



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Best Practices for Stewardship Leaders

Christian stewards live in relationships. God calls us into relationship with Him in Holy Baptism. Dr. Joel Biermann writes in *Stewardship: A Theological Perspective*, “The Christian life begins at the baptismal font. God calls and claims His own, Christ’s gifts are given, and the Spirit indwells the newly redeemed ... Stewardship is but a synonym for the life of a Christian who is living rightly within all of his relationships. ...”

R. Scott Rodin describes four of these relationships in his book, *The Steward Leader*. He states that holistic stewardship functions on four levels. The first level is our **relationship with God**. “We are called first to be stewards of our relationship with God. That means that our worship, reading and study of Scriptures, personal devotions and prayer life are acts of stewardship” (page 48). The second level is our **relationship with ourselves**. “...we are now caretakers of our understanding of who we are as children of the kingdom of God. This is a delicate balance; we are precious and beloved by God but also humble, thankful and obedient to his Word. As we maintain that balance with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are stewards of our self-image” (page 48).

The third level is our **relationship with our neighbor**. “We are called to be in good, whole, right, loving relationships with one another, seeking to love our neighbors as ourselves, working for peace and reconciliation, and serving our neighbor’s physical, emotional and spiritual needs as the Spirit directs us. We are called to make sure that our relationships with one another are never means but always ends” (page 49). The final level is our **relationship with God’s creation**. “Our restored relationship with creation calls us to be stewards of God’s creation and all the material possessions that we have, placing them and all of God’s beloved creation in the service of the kingdom of Christ” (page 49).

Steward leaders [the Chief Steward (pastor) and Stewardship Champions (lay leaders)] understand the need to examine all of their relationships in the light of God’s Word. Leader’s lead and one important way they lead is by example. The following statements provide some best practices for steward leaders.

1. Steward leaders are generous givers because God is the Great Giver. John 3:16 makes the point that God gave His only Son for us. He is the Great Giver. St. Paul tells the Ephesians (and us) in chapter 5 verses 1-2, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
 - How do you as a steward leader give generously in each of the levels Rodin identifies above?
2. Steward leaders are faithful. St. Paul tells the Corinthians in his first letter chapter 1 verse 9 that God is faithful. In 1 Corinthians 4:2 Paul states the principle, applied here to apostles and pastors but true also for all stewards, that “it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (or faithful).”
 - How is faithfulness as a Christian steward lived out in each level above?
3. Steward leaders are zealous for good works. St. Paul writes to Titus in the second chapter, “Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” In Matthew chapter 5 the following words of Jesus are recorded, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Steward leaders are zealous for good works because they glorify God.
 - How are you as a steward leader a model for good works in all of the relationships listed above?
4. Steward leaders live as stewards and not as owners. Steward leaders know that the only owner is God as the Psalmist writes, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). Steward leaders live and act as stewards (a steward is one who manages what belongs to someone else) not as owners knowing that everything in his/her possession is a trust from God as David says in 1 Chronicles 29:14.
 - How do you live and act as a steward and not an owner in each of the relationships above?

5. Steward leaders put God first in every relationship. St. Matthew records Jesus' words in chapter 6 verse 33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Jesus makes it plain that there is room for only one master in our lives when He says, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."
- What are some ways to put God first in every relationship listed above?

Living as God's steward, and especially as a steward leader, is no easy task. Maintaining relationships is hard work. Thankfully God gives us His Word to empower us and to instruct us "to live rightly within all of *our* relationships."

Resources

Stewardship resources to help with the practices above are located at faithaflame.lcms.org.

New resources on the faithaflame.lcms.org website are the *Stewardship Primer* and *Guidelines for Christian Stewards*. The *Stewardship Primer* focuses on the basics of Christian stewardship and is helpful as a discussion piece for steward leaders. *Guidelines for Christian Stewards* is a helpful tool for teaching members what it means to be a faithful Christian steward.

Check out the LCMS Online Store for Additional Stewardship Resources ■ www.lcms.org

To get to the LCMS Online Store go to www.lcms.org and click on the "Resources" tab. The Online Store tab is on the lower right side of the "Resources" window.

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StewardCAST is a monthly stewardship resource provided by Stewardship Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff is the Director of Stewardship Ministry. He can be reached at wayne.knolhoff@lcms.org

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