

Getting to the Big Picture

A Balanced Approach to the Stewardship of Life

Very few words carry more negative baggage than “stewardship.” It has such limited scope and so many negative connotations that even hearing the word makes most folks feel anxious and more than a few angry; which is really sad because “stewardship” is such a rich and evocative word. It is a gift and a privilege to be trusted as a steward and to share in the management, maintenance and mission of our lives. But many of us are still thinking of the stewardship of our lives in terms of fear and anxiety.

It’s clear that we need a bigger picture! So, this year we are intentionally expanding the definition of stewardship to focus on how we order our lives – in other words, how do our choices, our actions and our decisions demonstrate our understanding that God has made us stewards of our lives. Everything we do is an expression of what we value involving so much more than how much money we give to the work of God in our community. What we need is a balanced stewardship.

A model for balanced stewardship is one that embraces the following*:

1. Stewardship of natural world – finding a way to look after the earth and the environment through conservation and other means.
2. Stewardship of spirit and intellect – developing your time, talents, energy and gifts.
3. Stewardship of wellness – enhancing your health, relationships and lifestyle.
4. Stewardship of outreach – improving the lives of others in our church, our community and in the world.
5. Stewardship of finances – controlling your money rather than letting it control you.

If we follow these principles, our stewardship will become increasingly natural, authentic, and part of our growth and development as healthy spiritual persons. With that in mind, here is our new definition for the Stewardship of Life.

“In faithful stewardship we order our lives
To the glory of God
For the good of others
And the health of the world.”

And as the prayer of St. Francis reminds us: “For it is giving that we receive.....”

*these five points were inspired by the work of Rev. David Donoghue at ddonblog.wordpress.com.