

advancing stewardship

estate planning and other news

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The Stewardship of Time

Henry Eygenraam, Executive Director

In our conversations about Stewardship, people will often refer to the “4 T’s” - time talents, treasures and trees.

Since the theme of this newsletter is vacationing, I thought perhaps it would be useful to spend some time focusing on the TIME component of the 4 T’s. When considering the resource of time, we’re perhaps less interested in a dictionary definition than we are in a measure of how we utilize this gift. A significant measure of the quality of our lives is a measure of how we use the resource of time entrusted to us. It means that we need to acknowledge that we are stewards who have been *entrusted* with time and *charged with the responsibility* of managing it in the *owner’s* best interest.

The owner of time (God) has entrusted us with an interval measured between our birth and our call to be with Him. How we make use of it is a measure of the quality of our Stewardship.

Stephen Covey is a well known author of a book called “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”. In it, he dedicates a chapter to what he calls “taking time to sharpen the saw.” What he recognizes is the human need to step back from the regular activities of our daily tasks to ensure that the tools of our particular trade are in good shape. There is an element of Stewardship that requires us to have a healthy balance in our lives. We need to have time to do our work, time to be with loved ones, and time to engage our relationship with our Maker and a time of rest.

The time of rest was built into the weekly order of things with a time of Sabbath. It encompasses the concept of rest and worship. We also have come to

recognize that in our ever accelerated pace of life we need to have the time of refreshment and reflection away from the daily restless rush of activity.

In a recent conversation about an employment agreement, we noted that in order to be able to be effective we needed to plan vacations into each year. This is not a waste of time or a frivolous distraction, but a necessary part of being able to be effective in the tasks that we’re called to do. During one of our recent devotions in the office we focused on the story of Mary and Martha. Martha complained to Jesus that Mary wasn’t helping her with the work. Jesus’ response was to acknowledge the busy activity that Martha was engaged in but also pointed out that Mary had chosen the more important activity of being at the feet of the Master.

As we prepare for the various ways in which we make use of our summer vacation time, we would do well to remember that planning this use of the Lord’s resource entrusted to us, is part of the responsibility that we have as stewards. How can we use it...

\$ for the benefit of the One who entrusted it to us

\$ as a way to give balance and refreshment to ourselves and our loved ones,

\$ as an opportunity to reflect and focus on how we are using this gift,

\$ or as a time of refreshment to energize us for the tasks that still lie ahead of us?

The danger as well as the opportunity embodied in writing a piece like this is that it places me face to face with the need to examine my stewardship of time. Its also a reminder of another dimension of our need for grace. My hope is that each of us will benefit from this time of rest and reflection.

Are you REALLY ready for a holiday?

Greta Luimes, CSS Representative

So you're praying about and working on your summer holiday plans – booking the tickets, contacting relatives, confirming the time off. As the date approaches, more planning might include checking out the car, opening up the tent trailer, buying the new swim suits....you get the picture.

There might be another important item that needs to be added to the list that you won't find on most vacation planning schedules - **review your Wills and Powers of Attorney documents?** Are they in good holiday shape? (That question assumes you have a Will and Powers of Attorney. If you don't, now is the time to get them done!)

Take a few minutes well in advance of your holiday dates to reflect on what might happen if you were in a major accident or lost your lives while you were away. Review these questions and see how comfortable you feel about your plans once they've all been answered.

If you were lying in a hospital bed, do you have a Power of Attorney for Personal Care in place so someone you've personally chosen can make decisions on your behalf rather than the provincial court appointed individual? If it's your spouse and he/she is in the same position as you, who would make these decisions then?

Is someone chosen as Power of Attorney for Property to have access to your finances to pay your bills if your hospital stay was a long one?

Do you have a completed organ donation card? If so, is your family aware of your decisions?

If your life was lost, are there enough assets in your Estate to look after your spouse and/or children until they are able to take care of themselves?

Are you comfortable with the person(s) chosen to be your executor (trustee)? Does he/she know where all your important information is kept?

Are the guardians named in your Will still the people you would want your children to live with? Have you outlined specific instructions for them that reflect the dreams you have for your children?

After your family's needs have been met, have you planned to include distributions to charities in your Will planning? Is your family aware of your decisions?

If you aren't completely comfortable with the answers to these questions, please call your regional CSS Representative so that better plans can be put in place prior to your holiday. We're here to help you through the process, cost-free and confidentially.

Moneywise Meditations **Foreign Currency**

The New Testament tells us we are foreigners, aliens, strangers. Christians are citizens of the colony of heaven.

This truth suggests an interesting thought: The money we make and possess must be "foreign currency". We only do business with this currency as we travel through this foreign land.

Some of us have had the experience of traveling through foreign countries. We exchange our dollars into the currencies of those countries. And we conduct business transactions with those foreign currencies only as long as we are in those countries.

We do not assume long-term possession of foreign currency. We place no abiding confidence in it. We do not become attached to it. We only use it as we're traveling through.

Sometimes we place more value on money than it deserves. We make it too important. We become too preoccupied with it.

But remember this: Money is only a tool. It's a good tool. It can help us support our families. Assist our neighbors. Further the work of the kingdom. Carry out the will and purposes of God. But let us always treat it as "foreign currency."

Moneywise Meditations by John H. Rudy is a collection of meditations on Christian Stewardship. A limited number of copies are available for purchase from CSS. The price for the 160 page book is only \$7.50 including shipping. Contact the CSS office to order your copy.

GRACE for the Moment

Max Lucado

When I travel with my kids, I keep all the tickets in a satchel. When the time comes to board the plane or train, I stand between the attendant and the child. As each child passes, I place a ticket in her hand. She in turn gives the ticket to the attendant.

God does the same. He stands between us and our need, waiting to help us. For that reason the Bible says, "Let us boldly approach the throne of our gracious God, where we may receive mercy and his grace to find timely help" (Hebrews 4:16).

Did you note those last two words? "Timely help." Not too soon, nor too late. Just in time.

Just as it's my job to make sure my children have what they need, God will make sure you have what you need. From his hand you will receive "Timely help."



Going on Vacation: Avoid the Post- Vacation Catch-up

Rick DeGraaf,
Stewardship Coordinator

Taking the time out to 'smell-the-roses' and appreciating God's creation and relationships with family and friends is wonderful and can be so refreshing. A good 'steward' recognizes the importance of having a time away, a time for family and a time for recreation. It is our hope that you may enjoy those moments away to break from routine and the stress of daily work and living.

Yet, the ministries and expenses of our churches continue whether we're home or not. Yet, so often our church treasurers report how neglectful we are by not providing our regular financial giving while we are away. For many of us who have set regular monthly or weekly contribution goals, it means playing the difficult game of 'catch-up' when we get back. This game seems to be played at the same time that we're trying to 'catch-up' with the larger credit card balances left over from our vacation!

As in so many things, it's much better if we think ahead and take a proactive stand. As a good steward, please consider a number of options that will allow you to facilitate the ministries of your church:

Pay-ahead: the vacation months are a challenging time, financially for our treasurers. Consider giving your vacation

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advancing stewardship

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month's giving in advance – put a smile on the face of your church's treasurer.

Post-dated cheque: provide a post-dated cheque to cover the time you are away. Make sure this date is clearly indicated.

Consider **Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)** – an automatic withdrawal system for your church (budget) contributions (more details under the article titled "PAR").

Don't leave your church's needs waiting for you to 'catch-up'. A good steward is proactive and plans ahead!

Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)

In our hectic and busy lives we look to automate things to save time and effort. Many of us turn to automatic withdrawals to pay our bills, mortgage, car payments etc. Faithful giving to our churches also requires regular weekly, monthly or quarterly giving. How about automating your giving for your church?

Through the CRCNA denominational office in Burlington, this facility is now available – free of charge to CRC churches who have signed up for PAR program. CRC church treasurers need to initiate the PAR program with the CRC office (Terry Veldboom 1- (800)-730-3490 or par@crcna.ca) before members can take advantage of this automated giving tool.

On the positive side, PAR is very convenient and ensures that your giving is always on time without the hassle of remembering to write that cheque especially when you

are away for a trip or vacation. It also requires each participant to be more deliberate about their giving: actually sitting down and deciding how much to give for the next year.

However, some feel that the act of 'giving as worship' may be sidestepped and replaced by an attitude of just another bill to be paid. Therefore, I recommend that weekly giving for the free-will offering through vouchers or envelopes still be an active part of worship for all. PAR assures that the regular 'steward/member' contribution continues whether present or not.

Some may also feel that 'first-fruits' giving kind of loses its meaning if we're no longer writing out that first cheque for the church each time we get paid. If so, then PAR may not be for you, however, the PAR program includes symbolic giving cards that you can use to put in the offering plate to acknowledge your giving (details in the brochure).

Details including enrolment form can be found in the PAR Program brochure, "Are You On PAR". A few copies have been sent to all CRC churches in Canada. If you would like additional copies send an email with name and address to par@crcna.ca.

Request for Information: mail or fax to:

Christian Stewardship Services 600 Alden Road, Suite 315 Markham, Ontario L3R 0E7 Fax: (905) 947-9263

Please provide the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More information on the work of CSS | <input type="checkbox"/> Information on RRSP/RRIF Gifts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information on making a Will | <input type="checkbox"/> Information the CSS Endowment Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call me to arrange a visit / presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship Education Information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information on Charitable Gift Annuities | |

Name (s) _____

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