

## Stewardship at Work at Work

Stewardship is typically expressed as giving back to God from the abundance of gifts he has given us in time, talent, and treasure.

In treasure we are counseled to give to our parishes and charities a certain, fair portion of the money we earn through our work for pay. But is that all there is to the stewardship of treasure? Does that satisfy our faith's principles related to money?

Of course, not really. Our entire economic activity, as taught by the Church, is to be ordered to the service of persons, of the whole man, of the community (Catechism, ¶2426). We cannot acquire money through immoral means and justify it by tithing. Stewardship of treasure calls for us to give fair value for fair payment whether it is work for pay or sale of product or service for cash. As individuals and as an economic activity, we must be just with each other and contribute to the good of the community by our activity.

In time we are counseled to give to our parishes and charities a certain, fair portion of the time we have been given on this earth. So we volunteer for various parish activities and ministries. But is that all there is to the stewardship of time? Does that satisfy our faith's principles related to time?

Of course, not really. Our Church is but one of the communities to which each of us belongs and owes time to. We are children, we are parents, we are neighbors, we are citizens of local communities, states, and a nation. We must allot some time to each of these life-giving, life-sharing communities as well as to ourselves. At work stewardship of time would call us to give our attention to productive activities during work time. Ordinarily this would mean to do the work assigned to or accepted by us. It might mean taking some time to help a co-worker either with their work or with a personal concern that is interfering with their work. It may be something as simple as smiling and taking the time to be pleasant.

In talent we are counseled to give to our churches and charities the benefit of our talents on occasion. But is that all there is to the stewardship of talent? Does that satisfy our faith's principles related to use of talents?

Of course, not really. In Matthew's gospel there are two telling stories back to back, the Pieces of Silver and the Last Judgment (Matt.: 25:14-46). It seemed to me that the parable of the Pieces of Silver tells us we must use our talents and the story of the Last Judgment tells us the measure by which our use of our talents will be judged. In essence, we have received the talents to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome to the stranger, clothes to the naked, comfort to the ill, presence to the imprisoned. Mother Teresa in her writings expanded the concept of hunger and thirst from the purely physical to the spiritual. With this in mind, we practice faithful stewardship not only in our personal lives but also at work by

- Faithfully applying our talents to our work
- Generously sharing our gifts and talents
- Respecting the gifts and talents of others
- Living an acknowledgment that our gifts and talents are gifts from God
- Being disciplined in speech, eating, drinking
- Giving forgiveness when others hurt us
- Seeking forgiveness when we hurt others
- Respecting and honoring others' physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being
- Being a peacemaker when there is strife
- Being obedient to and respectful of those in supervisory positions
- Being respectful of those whom we supervise
- Standing, speaking, and working for what is right
- Telling the truth
- Giving our best when working
- Loving each of our co-workers, especially those difficult to love

## **STEWARDSHIP — A Faith Based Value at Work**

1. What does applying the faith-based value of stewardship in your workplace mean to you? What do you think it would mean to those with whom you work? How does its meaning change for your different workplaces, for example, home or where you volunteer?
2. Why is it important to gain an understanding of stewardship in the workplace and how to apply that understanding?
3. How do/could you apply the concept of stewardship in your workplace(s)?
4. What would happen in your workplace if you took and actively applied the value of faith-based stewardship in your workplace(s)? How would the workplace sound different? Look different? Feel different?
5. What first step are you willing to take this week?