

Five Biblical Principles of Stewardship

Response: The most basic principle is that as we give, we *respond to God*. The wonderful news of the gospel is that God loves us and makes us whole. God acts first, and we respond to what God has done. So we don't give to earn "brownie points" with God, or to earn God's favour. We give as a way of saying "thank you" to God. By responding faithfully, we express our gratitude to God.

Regularity: Responding to God in this way becomes a *habit*, a way of life, for Christian people. We give regularly, giving thanks to God in season and out of season. By giving regularly, we say that our joy in God is constant.

Proportionality: We are not all called to give the same amount. The Bible invites us to return a *certain portion* of what God has given us. The measure in the Old Testament is a tithe: the first 10% of our income is given to God. This principle helps us become aware of how God has blessed us. We ask, "How has God blessed me?" Then we ask, "What portion can we return to show how grateful we are to God? What portion of God's blessings can we return to show the level of our commitment to God's work and way through the life of the church?"

Priority: We set God's portion aside first. We don't pay the bills and then give what is left over to God. The first cheque we write is our offering. God's share comes off the top. Then, with what's left over, we pay the mortgage, for our food, our Mastercard bill, the car payments, the clothing bills, the telephone bill, and so on. In this way, we proclaim that God comes first. We organize our lives so that God is first in our lives.

RISK: The Christian life is an *adventure*. We embark on a journey with God. We don't know what's ahead on this journey, but we do know that God accompanies us and keeps us safe. To live according to these Biblical principles of giving means to step out in faith. To give to God means to start living in a way which shows that we really do trust God to care for us.

Principles: These five Biblical principles of Stewardship are for our *whole Christian life*. Stewardship is not so much about money. It is about how we live in relationship to God and to each other as disciples of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.