

# Stewardship as an Act of Worship

from Pastor Robert

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## *What is Christian stewardship? (why 'pledge'; why give?)*

At Good Shepherd, we are interested in doing “good ministry” – particularly ministry to which we believe God has called us. We are likewise interested in being good stewards of money that is given to the church. It is tempting to equate and define stewardship from the receiving end and get wrapped up in justifying programs, creating and balancing a budget, and encouraging tithing or sacrificial giving for the sake of the ministries to which we are called as a church.

However, this is getting the cart before the horse, as well-intentioned as it may be. Stewardship is first and foremost an act of personal and corporate WORSHIP, a faith-full response to the being and character of the Triune God we experience in Spirit, Truth, and Christian community.

In scripture, *stewardship* and being a *steward* has to do with serving a higher authority through wise use of that which belongs to the authority (whether God, king, or master). If “the earth and all it contains is the Lord’s” (Psalm 24:1), then *all* that we are and *all* that we have belong to God. Our stewardship is not a tax, tithe, token, or charitable gift, but our complete and obedient service to God. That is the definition of worship in the broad sense.

What about tithing? It is a great goal, a worthy goal! But it is not the end-all or even the purpose of stewardship. Tithing was part of the Law, intended to “train spiritual children” (Galatians 3:24-26). Tithing is not our expected maximum; it is like training wheels until we learn what it means to submit everything we have to God as an act of worship.

As long as our stewardship is understood only as giving to fund a budget and a set of ministries, or even as a tithe, we have put limits on our worship, just as surely as saying one can only worship with traditional music or King James English. And frankly, God’s mission and God Himself are just bigger than our human imaginations and limits!

At Good Shepherd, we have glimpsed the freedom and blessing of worshiping God in Spirit and in Truth, using “every means at our disposal to invite each worshiper into the presence of God” (*from the worship philosophy on the back of the bulletin*).

## ***Could we discover a similar freedom and expansiveness in terms of our stewardship-worship?***

With God’s help, I believe we can! I invite you to a new way of thinking about stewardship and your relationship to God through the Church.

In Christian love,

