

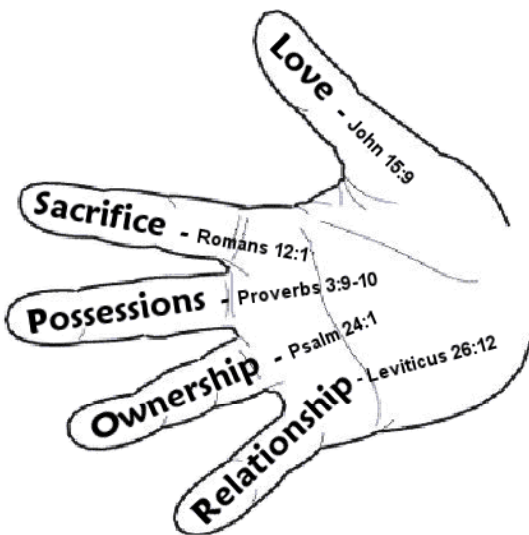
# Stewards and Stewardship

With the welcome help of Wikipedia, we have discovered the various meanings of the word **steward**. The term **Steward** may refer to the following:

- \* Arch-Steward, a seneschal, prince elector of the Holy Roman Empire
- \* Steward(ess), a Flight attendant
- \* Wine steward, a sommelier
- \* Butler, the steward of a household
- \* Steward (band), an Australian musical group
- \* Steward (office), a servant who manages property
- \* Steward's Assistant on a ship
- \* Chief Steward on a ship
- \* Lord Steward, an important official of the English Royal Household
- \* Union steward, an official position within a labour union. Also known as a Shop Steward

The same source reveals the meanings of **stewardship** as personal responsibility for taking care of another person's property or financial affairs or in religious orders taking care of finances. This has been expressed as the fingers of a hand.

## THE STEWARDSHIP HAND



### RELATIONSHIP Leviticus 26:9-13

God desires a close relationship with us. He loved us before we loved Him. Our relationship with God is not one of equals since He is the Owner and we are the stewards of His possessions.

### OWNERSHIP Psalm 24:1-5

God is the owner of everything and He has transferred dominion over His creation to us (Genesis 1:26). As faithful stewards, we understand that we have been assigned the management or stewardship of God's possession. We are responsible to the Owner for the manner in which we conduct our stewardship responsibilities.

### POSSESSIONS Proverbs 3:9-10

Because God loves us He has blessed us with many possessions, such as time, talent, and treasure. The way we use our possessions demonstrates our love to Him. As faithful stewards, we must use our possessions for His glory, to benefit others, and not just for personal gain.

### SACRIFICE Romans 12:1-2

The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament for sacrifice is "korban", and it means to come close to God. Sin separated us from God, but Christ's death on the cross, as the sacrifice for our sins, provided a way for us to come close to Him. As a Christian, living for Christ is our sacrifice to Him. When we use our possessions (time, talents, and treasures) to His glory and to benefit others, we signal to God, and to the world, our desire to have a close relationship with Him.

### LOVE John 15:9-11

God is love. Stewardship that is based on God's love allows us to look beyond the faults of others while using our possessions to supply their needs (John 13:34,35). The thumb is the only finger that can touch all of the other fingers, so our love for God and for our fellowmen must permeate all aspects of our stewardship experience. Stewardship is God's love in action through us.

# Stewardship is God's love in action



In its purist form, Stewardship is God's love in action seen in human relationships and most explicitly, in marriage.

In marriage, the self-giving of one man and one woman is the paradigm, the basis and the truest expression of the best in human love.

The “purist” form is achieved because one man and one woman make a public and unashamed declaration of commitment to each other “till death us do part.”

All our other commitments fall into place after this. Our commitments are many and varied, both personal commitments and our common commitments as a Christian congregation.

- As a congregation, as part of the Church of England and the world-wide Anglican Communion, we are committed to a life-long loving relationship which will establish others as a continuing and constant feature of our own life, and we of their life;
- We are committed to the best for our children, of course;
- We are committed to making a good society in which they may live and grow;
- As part of this, we are committed to establishing a Christian vision of what our life is for;
- And we are committed to presenting our vision as emanating from the love of God demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, as he lived and died on the cross.

In order to make these commitments happen, we belong to a Church congregation which creates costs and which has a vocation to make a difference. To make the commitments happen, we need to fund the work and pay the costs as a congregation, as fairly as we can, with each family contributing according to its means, rather than relying on the few.

The Bishops of our Church recommend that families contribute **£10 a week** towards the costs of commitment. Some families will not be able to afford this, others will be able to afford more and the matter is a confidential one for each family to agree. I hope that every family will regard this aspect of Church participation as a priority.

