

#2. Ownership and Stewardship

What is stewardship? What does it mean? Let me tell you a story that might help.

My friend, Ken Bombay, who's ministered for over half a century, shared this story with me. An longstanding member of his church became upset because the church was not going the way *he* thought it should. This lay leader walked into the Ken's study, looked Ken straight in the eye, and said: "I've been tithing faithfully to this church for 28 years and I demand...!"

Wow. Rude? Aggressive? Sure. But this man was sincere - *wrong* - but sincere. He

misunderstood tithing to be something like purchasing shares in a company - the more shares you have the bigger your 'right' to direct the affairs of God's kingdom. He didn't seem to realize that he was only a steward - a manager of God's goods. He didn't realize that giving to God is not buying influence - it is part of the management of the wealth that we have been entrusted with. He misunderstood stewardship as ownership.

You see the Bible tells us that God is the only true and rightful owner of everything. I'm his steward - the manager of what is His. Consider these scriptures...

1Cor 4:7 Paul writes “What do you have that you did not receive”

1Chron 29:16 King David says “...all this abundance that we have provided for building You a house...is all Your own”

Deut 8:18, Moses says “...remember the Lord your God. For it is He who gives you power to get wealth”

Ps 24:1 “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein”

Haggai 2, “the silver is mine and the gold, declares the Lord of hosts”

So it follows that all we are and all that we have is a trust from

God. He is the Owner. He allows us the freedom to manage our lives and property for His glory.

So as a priest, it's not *my* pulpit. As a worship minister it's not my piano, organ or band. As a tither it's not my church to micromanage.

Whatever responsibility or opportunity we have been given, it should be viewed as a gift from God.

We are His. The church is His. It's all about His honour and glory. In 1Cor6:19-20 St Paul says, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body".

As we come to give our tithes

**at the time of offering, the BCP
directs us to pray ...**

**“Blessed by thou, Lord God of
Israel forever and ever. All that
is in the heavens and earth is
Thine. All things come of Thee
and of Thine own have we
given Thee”.**

**So whether you've been tithing
for 28 years or 28 days, what
we put in the offering plate is
not ultimately ours. It is a
return on God's investment in
us.**

**Since it's His to begin with, it
gives our participation through
tithing a much deeper and
eternal significance. We are
not owners, we are stewards.
And for me - that's a whole lot
more fun.**