

A Cup of Generosity

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Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4:6

Churches everywhere start thinking about stewardship in the fall. I would like to think that it is about the coming of Thanksgiving or harvest time when we think about giving back the first fruits of what God has given us, but I have my doubts. It is much more likely that financially minded people are thinking about upcoming budget discussions and how to plan around the resources they hope to receive.

The best stewardship campaign I ever planned however was not done in the fall, but over Lent. I am writing this now in case anyone wants to think about doing it next spring.

About New Year's I asked people to begin thinking about the most generous person they knew and to write a short story about what they had observed about that person that made them think that way.

I gathered forty of these stories and turned them into classic devotional readings by adding a bible verse at the top and a prayer at the end. Then we published this devotional booklet for the congregation to read one each day during Lent.

The stories were lovely. One young girl wrote a story about her teacher. One man wrote about his wife and she, not knowing, wrote about him.

People were thinking about generosity from New Year's all the way through Lent to Easter. By the time we got to talking pledges in the fall people were thinking differently about giving.

This was old school with a devotional booklet. It would still work, but maybe the idea needs an update. Maybe people could be interviewed and recorded talking about the most generous person or people they know, and the interviews sent out daily during Lent or posted daily on websites, Facebook pages or Instagram.

In any case, stewardship is not about the budget. The budget is a necessary tool, but stewardship is about thanksgiving for what we have been given. And for us, since thanksgiving is a part of everything, it belongs in every season and in every heart.

My prayer for all of us is that when we see generosity, we not only notice it but learn from it until we are the ones that others are writing about and talking about and wanting to emulate. Amen

