



# Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

Stewardship Learning Community  
Introductory Session

## Opening Prayer

### Introduction

The scene is a typical American city or small town. As a family drives past their church, they notice the message board on the front lawn. It says that the sermon title for next Sunday is, “Christian Stewardship.” The husband says, “Oh, it looks like the pastor is going to preach about....”

You finish the sentence for him. What do you suppose he thinks the pastor will preach about? Would this be your reaction? Would it be the reaction of most of the members of this congregation? Why or why not?

R. B. Cunningham, in his book *Creative Stewardship*, made the following observation, “The irony is that stewardship is a common word in the vocabulary of American churches, but a word subject to superficial definition, trivialization and misunderstanding.

- How is the word “stewardship” superficially defined?
- How is it trivialized?
- How is it misunderstood?

Cunningham goes on to say, “The damaging result of limiting stewardship primarily to financial concerns is that the real nature of Christian giving cannot be understood in isolation from the wider horizons of stewardship. Consequently, many people never come to see the far-reaching implications of stewardship for how they live all of life.”



### **A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER**

Almighty God,  
we belong to You.

All that we have  
comes from You;  
our family and friends,  
our health,  
our possessions and energy,  
our leisure and abilities.

Help us to share  
in the blessings of giving  
as well as the happiness  
of receiving.

We ask this in the name of  
Jesus, Your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns  
with You and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has defined Christian stewardship in this way:

***Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.***

- Explain why you think this definition does or does not get at what Christian stewardship is all about.
- What strikes you as the most important aspect of this definition?
- What part of this definition would you like to expand or change?

### **The Purpose of a Stewardship Learning Community**

A Stewardship Learning Community is established to further stewardship education among the leaders of the congregation. The learning community functions as the place where stewardship leaders can reflect, build relationships, plan, and hold each other accountable as they explore together the topic of Biblical stewardship. Christian stewardship is a spiritual issue and growth in stewardship is a spiritual journey. Leaders in this Stewardship Learning Community will be encouraged to practice such spiritual disciplines as: daily prayer, daily Scripture reading, regular worship, growth in giving, serving others in Jesus' name, and sharing the faith story with each other and the unchurched.

The Stewardship Learning Community serves as a place for the growth of individual participants. It also serves as a springboard for helping all members of the congregation grow in this area.

### **Discussion**

- Which of the above listed spiritual disciplines do you find the most difficult in your life? Explain.
- How can we help each other improve in these areas?
- Which area will you commit to grow in over the next month? What is your plan?

Time should be provided in each session for members of the community to share how they are progressing on the goals they set for themselves.

### **Closing Prayer**

Provide time at the end of each session for questions, comments and group prayer. The prayer can take one of the following forms or be done in a way the group decides.

Adoration...

Confession...

Thanksgiving...

Supplication...

Praise...

Remember...

Ask...

Yield...



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
District and Congregational Services  
Stewardship Ministry  
Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff, Director  
stewardship@lcms.org