

SJM, 3rd Sept 2017, 8.30am

Christian Stewardship

Jer 15 v15-21

Psalm 26 v1-8

Romans 12 v9-21

Matthew 16 v21-28

In a few weeks we begin our stewardship campaign in both churches in the benefice. Wake up! This is not about money.

Listen to what the diocesan stewardship officer has written on the website about stewardship:

"Stewardship is a familiar word and also something that is essential to help churches grow and impact their communities. But what exactly is stewardship?"

Stewardship is understanding the biblical concept of human life, which is that we are created in God's image to serve His purposes during our time on this earth, which helps prepare us for eternal life to come. Thus, to live as a 'steward' is to treat everything we have as not actually being 'ours' but instead as being 'His', which He has left to us to use wisely and well.

All churches face challenges related to the availability of resources, both human and financial. However, rather than trying to brow-beat, beg or 'guilt-trip' people into the generous sharing of their individual means, developing the concept of a stewardship 'culture' enables churches to encourage generosity of time, talents and finances in a positive manner. Closely linking as it does with Mission Action Planning, stewardship is the key to every aspect of healthy church life."

Later in the main service – to which you are most welcome – we will be asking people to consider 3 questions:

- What have I received from God?
- How can I best use these gifts?
- What should I be praying for?

This is a service of worship because God has given us His all and equipped us with different gifts, skills and talents. The American evangelist, Max Lucardo, describes the church as a poem, a collection of individuals in all their great variety:

'Poetry demands variety. God uses all types to type his message.

Logical thinkers

Emotional worshippers

Dynamic leaders

Docile followers

Visionary leaders

Stodious academics

Generous financiers

Alone, we are meaningless symbols on a page.

But collectively, we inspire...'

Active stewardship is that work in action: created in God's image to serve His purposes during our time on earth. So I would ask you to consider these questions as part of this church family:

- What have I received from God?
- How can I best use these gifts?
- What should I be praying for?