



Stewardship - Annual Review

If we only 'do stewardship' when money is tight or problems need solving then we connect our money talk with money worries. Good giving will solve problems but the language of gratitude and celebration, obedience and generosity, ministry and mission must shape our money talk. The annual review can celebrate our achievements and remind us that God's vision is greater than ours and that he can always use our greater generosity. We review our changing financial circumstance. The annual review challenges people to review their giving, to ensure that ministry is properly resourced and finances not diminished by inflation.

Timing

The timing of an annual review is a local decision. It may be a patronal festival, a church anniversary, the annual church meeting, a 'stewardship Sunday' or the start of the financial year. Some are already times of celebration and all can be enhanced by a social event. A social can range from coffee, cake and a short presentation after the Sunday service to a Saturday night Epiphany party on the theme, 'Making Jesus Known'.

Preaching

Preaching is an indispensable part of any stewardship ministry and foundational to the annual review. The preacher speaks of what God has done in Jesus and she invites a response. As our lives are being transformed by grace, so we must excel in the grace of giving (2 Cor 8:7). We must speak about bills and budgets; preaching frees us to speak also of worship and obedience, ministry and mission, love and grace.

In most cases preaching at the annual review means a single sermon so that one opportunity requires careful thought. Beware of overloading one sermon; the context of the review sermon should be year round stewardship preaching which tackles our borrowing, saving and spending - not just our giving. The review sermon will be shaped in part by the purpose of the review but will always seek to take a fresh look at what the bible says about generous giving and discipleship and will always invite a review of giving to God's work in the local church.

Communication

An annual review leaflet given to everyone who comes to church can serve three important functions. First, the review leaflet provides headline financial information about the church's income and expenditure which will be new to many. Second, it is a take home reminder of the need for action and response. Third, the leaflet makes contact with those not in church on a review Sunday.