

Using our God-given gifts

Stewardship is not just about money

Everyone has natural abilities. We are all differently gifted and some are more gifted than others. But we are all called to make good use of what is given.

The Bible talks about 'gifts of the Spirit'. These are varied (see lists in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:7-13 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). The main thing is that whatever the gift, it is from God

and not for us to boast about. Gifts are to be used for the good of the church.

The challenge is to decide which gifts we have been given and how they might be put to good use in service of the church and of the world. Nobody should count themselves out. Jesus spoke about laziness (Matthew 25:14-30).

What matters most

What we do with what we have can be difficult to discuss. However, it should matter to us as it does to God. We need to respond to what we feel God wants us to do. We gain that sense through prayer, reading His word in the Bible and being active in the church.

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.'
1 Corinthians 12: 4-6

Who, what, where and when

Stanley Road Baptist Church

We are an active, medium-sized church, based in Morecambe and Heysham. We meet each Sunday at 10.30am for our worship service. We aim to make this accessible for as many people as possible.

We also run a programme of groups, seeking to share the love of God with other members of our community, as we have done for over a century. We take seriously the need to 'build up' the church and through our Sunday services, and in other ways, we seek to help people develop their faith in Christ.



Why we do what we do

This is one of a series of leaflets, based on the Baptist Union's 'Baptist Basics' publications. Others available: Stewardship; Baptism; Legacies; Children. Further information is also available at www.stanleyroad.org.uk

Why we do what we do



Stewardship

A guide to explain our approach to using our gifts and our money at Stanley Road Baptist Church



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Why we do what we do: Stewardship at Stanley Road Baptist Church

What is 'Stewardship'?

One of the basic Christian beliefs is that what we have comes from God. We are not all given the same, but we are all expected to do something useful with what we have.

This is the concept of stewardship.

'You should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'
1 Peter 4:10

Not being bothered enough to do anything at all with what we have been given is as much a form of sin as actively doing something wrong.

There are several ways of looking at stewardship. We are stewards of the world God has given us. We can use creation, but not in a way that threatens its survival and well-being.

Two other examples of stewardship are what we do with our gifts and our wealth. This leaflet explores what that means at Stanley Road Baptist Church.

Stewardship of wealth

Jesus probably says more about the use of money than any other topic. Think of his sayings, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:23) and that 'you cannot serve both God and money' (Matthew 6:24).

Jesus' words show that having wealth carries dangers and temptations. See how Jesus contrasts the poor widow giving all she had, and the rich people who were putting in their gifts (Luke 21:1-4). We can resist this temptation by seeing wealth as something to use responsibly.

Some suggested guidelines:

* **Live simply but make reasonable provision** We should be happy to settle for enough, whilst ensuring we care for those dependent on us. Many find it helpful to set aside what should be given away and then live off the rest.

* **Give systematically and proportionally out of your income** Christians debate whether they have to give a tenth of their income away. This is not a New Testament command, but it is not a bad guide when considering your giving. Giving regularly in relation to income is commended in the Bible (2 Corinthians 8:3).

* **Generosity can be joyful** 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:7-8) and He blesses those who seek to be generous (Luke 6:37-8).

* **Take risks** The Bible warns against the love of money and being spontaneous is one way of affirming your freedom.

What does the church do with money?

We give around 10% of our income away to Christian organisations, some in our denomination and others that work locally or further afield. We set a budget for our activities each year, and present our accounts each Spring at our AGM.

We encourage all those who pay tax to **gift aid** their giving. This is a significant part of our income and gives tax-payers a chance to make the most of their wealth.

We have a Finance team that meets once a quarter. This team reports to the Trustees through our Treasurer.

'I have learned to be content with whatever I have'
Philippians 4:11

