



*The Rev. Dr. Susan R. Andrews*

Dear Friends in Christ:

My early memories of worship are wonderful. With my Dad preaching and my mother singing in the choir, I usually sat with some nice church lady who kept me safe. I loved sitting on the soft pew cushions with music flowing all around me and sunlight dancing on the walls of the sanctuary. My favorite part of the service was always the offering, because I could participate. I could place my nickle on the velvet lining, and then imagine myself curled up in that plate, being carried forward as an offering to God. Yes, worship taught me that the life blood of the Christian life is generosity—a generosity of one's whole self, given in thanksgiving for all the blessings of life.

Paul gives us the best stewardship text in all of scripture. Talking about the believers in Macedonia he reminds us that in their abundant joy and extreme poverty, these faithful Christians "have overflowed in a wealth of generosity" giving "beyond their means." (II Corinthians 8: 2-4). In fact, they have "begged for the privilege" of giving! Such eager and foolish generosity seems counter-cultural in our contemporary, get-rich culture. But it is a clear and present way that we can imitate Christ, who gave himself that we might live.

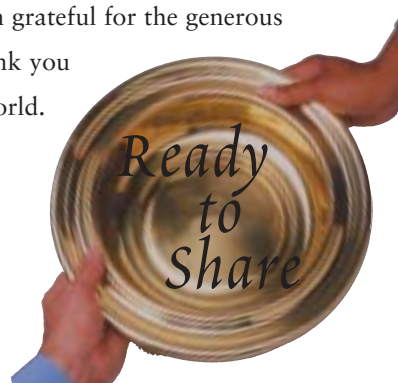
My husband and I have been tithers since the first day of our marriage. Through broken down cars, educational loans, aging parents, two college tuitions, and broken hot water heaters, we have maintained the discipline of giving to God—off the top. And strangely, such a pattern, has deepened our sense of gratitude, and refocused our understanding of wealth. It is not what we have, but who we are through the grace of God that defines our sense of well-being.

As I travel across the church this year, I am grateful for the generous hearts and minds of all kinds of Presbyterians. Thank you for the difference all of you are making in God's world.

Faithfully Yours,

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*Ready to Share*



I TIMOTHY 6:18

*Stewardship*