

January 14, 2018
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Samuel, Samuel! "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.
Where are you staying? Come and See"**

This morning, the Community Church here in Rockaway held a Men's Breakfast and invited men from St. Mary to join them. Three of us were available to go. It was wonderful. We ate, we talked, we laughed and we prayed together. One of the men said, "*Church isn't a place we just attend, it's a place where we cook breakfast.*" They plan to do this every first Saturday of the month.

They got it! Church isn't about something just to attend, it's about showing up, cooking breakfast, preparing something for someone.

*Friends of St. Mary! Speak, Lord, your servants are listening.
Where are you staying? Come and See!*

Stewardship

Showing up, cooking breakfast, preparing something for someone is what the church calls "Stewardship." I've always been a bit uncertain on what this term means, thinking of it primarily as raising church funds. I now see Stewardship as something more. It's about showing up, cooking breakfast, preparing something for someone.

Stewardship refers to someone who is entrusted with the management of someone else's affairs. Biblical Stewardship is about something more than church budgets and building programs, it's about how we manage our faith; it's about being stewards of our faith.

Bill Peel in, "*The High Calling, Everyday Conversations about work, life and God,*" describes three principles of Biblical Stewardship:

- (1) The Principle of Non-Ownership:

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." Ps. 24. In the story of the Garden, God creates everything and charges Adam and Eve to work it and care for it. Stewardship expresses God's commission to us to care for the earth and all of God's creation, and that we have no absolute right of control over our property or ourselves.

(2) The Principle of Responsibility:

"Although God gives us everything, nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to God. God entrusts us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything. We are to manage what God has given us - our time, money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships, and authority.

(3) The Principle of Reward:

"The Biblical Steward hears: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Mt. 25:21)

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What Stewardship looks like

The current issue of the diocesan paper, "*The Sentinel*," offered the following descriptive comments on Evangelization. I saw them as being equally applicable to Stewardship. They are as follows:

Stewardship is more than action, it's about being stewards of our faith.

Stewardship sees self as more than a parishioner.

Stewardship keeps faith from remaining in the church.

Stewardship shows Christ working through us - everywhere.

Stewardship is not trying to drag people into church.

Stewardship is about what we feel drawn to do.

Stewardship is not about being heroes, it's about being present.

Stewardship begins and ends in prayer.
Churches with small group activities and home visits have the most energy.

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Now it's about us

Being Christian is about more than just attending church. It's about showing up, cooking breakfast, preparing something for someone. It's about managing our faith in our political, economic and social lives. It's about having breakfast together at the Rockaway Community Church.

During this coming week, let us all consider how we are being invited to be stewards of our faith in this church. Next weekend, we will have sign-up sheets for tasks that need to be met here at St. Mary. What do we see that we can do to help, to show up, cook breakfast, prepare something for someone?

The following week, we will do the same for our larger community - what are the needs we see that we can help, show up, cook breakfast, prepare something for someone?

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