



What do I have to Give?

Excerpt from a guest post from Tracy Earl Welliver, Director of Parish and Community Engagement with Liturgical Publications, Inc

In our parish communities, we ask people to give of themselves more and more. We use St. Paul's image of the Body of Christ to illustrate how we all play a part in God's Kingdom. We express that the need is great and that the only way for us to succeed is to pull together. Then...most people still don't step forward. One reason why is that many seated in our pews do not have an answer to the question, "What do I have to give?"

Most people have no real sense of time.

Everyone seems to be equally busy, but that is impossible. In fact, most of us suffer from mismanagement of time and procrastination. Time is a precious gift, so stewardship of that time should be crucial for any mature disciple.

Too many people have no sense of their uniqueness and talents. We are good at analyzing everyone else, but not ourselves. I have encountered too many people to count over the years who said they would give of themselves to a parish, a charity, or a civic organization, but they have nothing specific to give.

What is the answer?

Helping intentional disciples to lead a stewardship way of life. It is about daily living as generous beings answering the call of Jesus Christ no matter the cost.

It is a parish community's responsibility to help people understand this life. All treasure is sacred, not just what ends up in the offertory. We need to learn about time management and the benefits of a prayer life. Walking with God more closely will not only refocus our time, but it will actually provide us with seemingly more time as we slow down and hand over our days to God.

Then, we need to take advantage of programs on discernment of talents and charisms. The Clifton StrengthsFinder© and Living Your Strengths Journey offered at parishes can help people see the unique beings they are and all the gifts God has given them to share. People can even find themselves liberated from a false vision of who they thought they should be, embracing the real person that God created and shaped in the Spirit.

If those in the pews turn to the Church for assistance in living a stewardship way of life, our community will see fruits of a stewardship community. It will become a community of disciples that answers the question, "What do I have to give?" with the answer, "Everything."