

Today we begin our stewardship emphasis for 2016. As we move through the next couple of weeks, we will be talking about the total giving our ourselves to the glory of God as we give of our time, our talents and our resources.

As we start, there are a couple of points that I want to share so that we are all on the same page. The first point is that everything we have and everything that we are is because of what God has given us or blessed us with. So as we talk about what we give to God, we are really talking about giving back part of what God has already given us. The second point is that what you give to God is between you and God. In regards to the time and talents, more people will know how you share your gifts because they will see what you do. But when we talk of our financial giving, that is between you and God. Our office manager, Gloria, is the only person who will see your pledge because she will record it in the computer. Nobody else sees those including myself.

So today, we start with our time and talents. In talking about our time and talents, I want to share a conversation, or at least what I remember of it from last Saturday. I think the initial conversation took place on the scaffolding with Eugene. The plate glass was already off and at the glass shop for the back window and I think we were working on the middle window. Eugene said something on the order that it was nice that we had a group of people come together to figure out how to get the glass down the scaffolding without breaking it.

When we did the first window, we had 5 people, Eugene and I on the lift and Rick, Ted and Dr. Sloo on the ground to make sure that the glass did not swing and hit the scaffold. Noon came around and Eugene and Ted were able to work longer so I joined them and the three of us took on the second window. Eugene and I were still on the lift, but Ted was the only one on the ground to work the three ropes. I had no idea how that would work, but being the retired fireman, Ted rigged the ropes so that he could control all three at the same time. I can honestly say that I would never have figured that one out but I didn't have to because somebody else knew how to do it.

And that is the greatest benefit to having multiple people giving of their time and talents. One person doesn't have to have all of the answers because we are able to take everybody's opinion and figure out what is the best option.

The other positive of having multiple people helping is that when you have more people, the work is more easily handled. All of the work does not fall on just a few but is shared by many. We all have time and we all have talents. How we use them is up to us.

Even though how we use our time and talents is up to each of us, I can tell you that the work is a lot easier if we work together as the body of Christ. By ourselves, our time and

talents may not make that big of a dent in a project. But when we combine what I have to offer with what a couple of other people have to offer, then we are able to make a bigger difference.

Let's take worship as another example. Have you ever stopped to think about what it takes in regards to volunteers for each worship service? Just for this worship service, we have 4 ushers, two greeters, a lector, an assisting minister, two communion assistants and an acolyte. That is 11 people just for this worship and that does not even include our other worship service nor the altar guild members who help prepare the sanctuary for worship. There were 5 or so ladies here last Wednesday to decorate for fall. When we have full communion, there are usually two members who set up communion on Saturday, another lady on Sunday morning to take care of the flagon of wine and bread and then another two to clean up after worship. Then the ladies will change banners and paraments as needed so that we are ready for the next week.

When you stop and think about everything we do here at Immanuel, the only reason it happens is because of you. We come together and do ministry together. This is not an individual based effort, it is a team effort because without the help of one another, we cannot accomplish what we do.

This week, think about how God is calling you as HIS disciple at this time and place. Ask for HIS guidance as you determine how you are able to give back for HIS glory. And then respond as you are able to give back part of your time and talents so that we may share the gospel with those we interact with.