

Stewardship is not a church collection.

“I was giving \$20 a week to the church, until I got mad at the pastor, now I only give \$5.” What is wrong with that statement? First, it equates our offerings as giving to the church, or to the pastor. Second, it equates our offerings with paying for a service, the more you like the service, the more you give, the less you like it, the less you give. Third, it equates our offering with power.

Now, to correct those misunderstandings about the giving of our offerings. First, we do not give to the church, nor do we give to the pastor, but we give to God. Actually, we return to God, a portion of what He has first given to us. God gives to us first. Fortunately for us, He does not, necessarily, stop giving to us when we stop giving to Him. I wonder how *we* would react to God if He did just that.

Second, we do not give our offerings in order to pay for our worship experience, as if we are going to a movie, play or performance of some kind. Worship, the Word, Holy Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, these are all gifts that God gives to us. They do not cost us anything. (They cost Jesus His life.) God does not charge for His gifts. Our giving is in response to what God first gives to us, spiritual and physical blessings.

Third, the giving of our offerings to God does not affect the service of the church or the pastor. If one person stops giving, if the largest giver stops giving, God will find another way to support His church. It is God’s church and as long as His church is doing His ministry, giving the Word and the Sacraments, He will make sure that there is the where-with-all to continue to do so.

Stewardship is our responding to what the Lord has already given to us. We respond with our firstfruits (returning to Him from off the top), our tithes (a certain percent), and our offerings (of thanksgiving and praise).