

STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT

Promoting Good Stewardship

The Stewardship Department of the Netherlands Union Conference of Churches exists to inform instruct and promote to our membership and the wider community our obligations to God as creator and owner of all.

Four Pillars of Stewardship

The doctrine of Stewardship rests on four pillars:

- [God Is Owner](#)
- [Man Is a Trustee](#)
- [Tithes & Offerings](#)
- [What is left](#)

Hence we are answerable to him for our use of his creation.

As a trustee I have no rights only obligations; hence I must relate to creation in a way that will please its owner.

Should be given as a sign of God's ownership & man's Stewardship.

Should be used for God's glory and man's good.

Much More Than Money

Stewardship involves money but it is much more than money, it involves every aspect of our lives, including:

- Time
- Temple / Body
- Talents
- Tithe
- Therefore every decision and choice that we make effectively is a spiritual decision, because of the fact of our accountability to God.

Facilitating Local Churches

The Netherlands Union Conference of Churches Stewardship Department conducts Seminars, discussions and religious lectures. We seek to instruct and educate the church community as to its obligations to God and how they can faithfully and effectively discharge their Trust in relation to their resources not just while they are alive but when they die.

HOLISTIC STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Ministries focuses on putting God first in all areas of our lives. While our ministry may focus on giving, there are also many ways to give. Here are some sites that may help the steward apply biblical stewardship principles in all areas of life and ministry.

PLANS

1. The Tithe and Offerings Readings booklet is published annually, and has 52 readings, one for each Sabbath of the year. These readings are designed to be read before the offering is taken up during the Sabbath service. Each week's reading is also placed on our Facebook page, on Thursdays, for your convenience.
- 2.

Stewardship

What is a steward?

Stewards were created to 'image' God and to represent His interests. To be a living image, stewards must mirror God's love, character and purpose. God's stewards are to demonstrate what He is like. Creation and redemption place stewards in close relationship with their Master. Stewards are disciples of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to be a steward in God's family?

Stewards come from all races, tribes, languages, and nations to be members of God's family. Membership in God's family transcends all other ties and human relationships. Membership in God's family means that stewards become one in purpose and one in mission. This oneness of purpose fulfills the prayer of Christ: "That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:21).

What is stewardship?

The starting point of stewardship is to recognize that God initiates stewardship. He gives us life and invites us into intimate partnership. This partnership begins with accepting Jesus Christ as Savior—experiencing the joy of Salvation. This then leads us to trust Him enough to accept Him as Lord or Owner of our lives.

What is Biblical stewardship?

The Bible tells us that only a person who has a relationship with God can truly partner with Him and worship Him with their whole life. Stewardship is acknowledgement of God's ownership and sovereignty and also of Jesus Christ's claim of lordship in our lives.

Is money part of stewardship?

Yes. Yet, stewardship also includes every area of life: our bodies, skills, time, environment, and work. In loving God with all of our heart, mind and soul, all of our affairs reflect who we are in relationship to who God is. Therefore, with this all-inclusive view of stewardship, Jesus is also Lord of our financial resources.

Who are faithful stewards?

Viewed from its totality, stewardship is an expression of discipleship with a heart for God's mission in the world. Stewards are partners with God, living out their faithfulness as members and church leaders in unity with His worldwide church. Consequently, stewardship is the lifestyle of one who has accepted Christ's lordship, and is walking in partnership with God and acting as God's agent to manage His affairs on earth.

Tithe

What is tithe?

Tithe is one tenth of your increase from either money or product that is returned to God. It is holy and belongs to Him, the Owner of all of our material possessions and lives. (Leviticus 27:30). The returning of tithes is an expression of our faithfulness to God.

Is there a difference between tithes and offerings?

Yes. Tithes are returned while offerings are given. Offerings are our response of love and gratitude to God's blessings and goodness. In giving tithes and offerings we worship God and advance His mission to make disciples in the world.

When should I tithe?

Tithe should be returned first, when the personal income or increase is received.

How is tithe to be returned?

With money, place it in a Tithe and Offering envelope and return the envelope to the church you attend. Make it an act of worship as you remember that He is your Creator, Redeemer and Lord of all your life.

How is the tithe distributed?

Within the SDA church tithe is received by the local congregation and sent on to the local conference/mission/field office. This is the central "storehouse" for distribution in keeping with Church Policy.

How is the tithe used?

While the distribution percentages vary somewhat in different conferences, the largest portion of the tithe is used to support the ministry of local churches through pastoral salaries, as well as evangelism and additional services provided to the local church.

Was the tithing system practiced in the Old Testament?

Yes. As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, tithing was reaffirmed by God (Deuteronomy 14:22-27). The tithing system reaches beyond the days of Moses and Abraham thus providing a foundation for tithing practices in the New Testament.

Should people tithe when in debt?

Regardless of your financial obligations, you are always 'in debt' to God, the owner of all. It is a gross injustice to use God's holy tithe to square your accounts with human creditors.

Is tithing easier for the rich than for the poor?

Love is the motive and rational that leads us to recognize our responsibility whether rich or poor. Without love, the rich will not like to return tithe. Without love, the poor will not like to return tithe from the little he has. Tithing is easy for all who remember God's ownership and respond in love and worship.

Why should we tithe?

By returning one tenth of our increase to Him, we remember God is the owner of everything He has entrusted into our hands. Tithing incorporates our worship to partnership with God, support of His mission, ministry, and church. Tithing is also an expression of loyalty that connects us with God's promises and blessings, giving us a sense of fellowship in the Divine-human partnership.

Offerings

What are offerings?

Offerings are our response of love responding to God's blessings and goodness. They serve as a means of helping to further integrate God into the financial side of our lives. Recognizing God as Owner, we follow the convicting of the Holy Spirit--managing what He has placed in our hands and worshiping God by returning some of what He has placed in our hands. We give where and how the Holy Spirit convicts and empowers us to do so. We give to worship God--and we do so by supporting His Church, by advancing His mission, by helping others-but most of all by listening to Him and following where leads and doing what He convicts.

How should I give offerings?

Two principles should guide our offerings-as God blesses and as He guides us through His Spirit--"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7, NIV). The Macedonian churches give us an example of the way to give. "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the

saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will" (2 Cor. 8:3-5, NIV).

What are Special Offerings?

Special offerings are offerings that are approved by the GC Executive Committee. These special offerings are collected every year worldwide during the worship service in support of programs, projects, institutions, or agencies of the church. The offerings are "special" because they are collected separately from the mission offerings received through Sabbath School and each has a specific purpose. See the Resources page on this site and click on Annual and the link for Special Offerings for examples of such offerings.

Storehouse

What does the term "storehouse" mean?

The term "storehouse" has become a contemporary term describing the place we choose to which we bring our tithes. It comes from God's call in Malachi 3:10-"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it (NIV).

Where did the term "storehouse" originate?

The concept of storehouse began during the revival at the time of King Hezekiah when the people returned their past tithe as part of the revival. So much was brought in that the king ordered the construction of storerooms (2 Chronicles 31:2-11).

How does the "storehouse" function in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

The local conference office is considered the storehouse for tithe within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tithe is returned through the local congregation and then passed on to the conference where it is distributed according to the policies voted by the world church. Most of the tithe is used within the local conference, and the major portion is used for ministry in the local church.

History of Giving

The early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers were largely self-supporting. They worked "on faith" without financial backing other than their own resources and occasional gifts. These gifts were based on generosity rather than being proportionate to donor income or part of a systematic giving program.

As the result of a Bible class conducted by J.N. Andrews, the name "Systematic Benevolence On the Tithing Principle" was given to the early Adventist financial giving system in 1859. Ellen G. White strongly affirmed the concept of "Systematic Benevolence," and said, "God has devised a plan by which all may give as He has prospered them, and which will make giving a habit without waiting for special calls.... Until all shall carry out the plan of systematic benevolence, there will be a failure in coming up to the apostolic rule" (Testimonies, vol. 3, p. 411).

The "Tithing System", as it became known in later years, also included voluntary offerings. The great mission thrust of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was launched through the plan of "Tithe Sharing" and the systematic offerings of members. It included the weekly Sabbath School Mission Offerings begun in 1877 and later the Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings, Birthday/Thank Offerings, and Sabbath School Investment.

The forerunner of the Stewardship Ministries was the Church Development Service, which provided counseling for capital building projects for Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America (1959-1966). At the General Conference Session of 1966 the new department was organized. The name Stewardship and Development was recommended by the General Conference President, Robert H. Pierson, and became official at the 1967 Annual Council.

The Department of Stewardship and Development enjoyed a place of prime importance in the church during the decade of the 1970's, as indicated by the appointment of Stewardship Directors in most divisions, unions, and conferences worldwide. At the same time, the concept of stewardship moved from a focus on capital fund raising to a more complete biblical view of stewardship of treasure, talent, time, and body temple. At the General Conference Session in 1980, the Department of Stewardship and Development was merged with the Ministerial Association. The Departmental emphasis now included an emphasis on tithe and offering education, as well as personal and family finance. At the 1985 General Conference Session, Stewardship and Development was integrated into a newly proposed Department of Church Ministries, along with Family Life, Lay Activities (Personal Ministries), Sabbath School, and Youth. During the early 1990's a stewardship revival and a renewal of interest in stewardship began in many countries of the world. At the General Conference Session in 1995, Stewardship Ministries again became a Department of the Church. This organizational renewal provided an opportunity to develop a conceptual redefinition, which included an expanded philosophy of stewardship as a Christian lifestyle in partnership with and in Christ.

Faith and Finance: Financial Planning with a Faith Factor, by G. Edward Reid.

The *Participant's Guide*, a great 12 lesson practical study on personal money management, offers Biblical principles along with timely skill-building exercises needed to manage family finances in today's world.

The *Leader's Guide*, created as a companion resource for small groups, is easy to use and promoting peer mentoring. The discussion questions are designed so that group participants will benefit from new insights, practical ideas, and become better

equipped to manage their family finances. Engaging PowerPoint presentations for each lesson on DVD are included, offering the option for review or lesson presentation with the *Leader's Guide* in small groups.

The *DVD Set*, a handy tool, is also available for presentation to larger groups or for personal use.

Topics include:

- Financial Planning for the Cycle of Life
- Giving: Tithe, Offerings, Helping Others
- Dealing with Debt: Getting Out and Staying Out
- Making a Budget: Counting the Cost
- Training Children, Money and Marriage, Money and Singles
- Inheritance and Estate Planning
- The Rewards of Financial Faithfulness
- And many more...