

Saturday, October 7, 2017

The First Stewardship Campaign

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostle's feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Acts 4:32-35

This could have been the first stewardship campaign in the early church. If so, it proved so successful that there's plenty to learn from these three verses. We are told that the early Christians were all of one mind and heart. What contributed to this spiritual unity? Did their unity come from their confidence in the gospel they were spreading? Did their unity come from prayer for the church and for each other? Did their unity come from the grace and power of the Holy Spirit moving among them? Probably from all of these.

What motivated them to such generosity? I believe their "one in heart and mind" extended to their possessions. No one claimed their possessions were their own. They understood all blessings were from God and they were only sharing what was truly His. By sharing and meeting the needs of the early church, there were no needy persons among them. Imagine. The sharing was voluntary, not commanded, and it did not involve all their private property, only what was needed at any given time. And, you might also note, they shared everything. EVERYTHING. I believe the early church members shared not only their God-given possessions but also their God-given time, talents and love to further the ministry of the church.

A healthy Christian community attracts people to Christ. The early Church's zeal was contagious. Are we doing all we can to make our church the kind of place that attracts people to Christ?

Imagine what we as the church today could accomplish if we were all united in mind and heart and shared to meet the needs in our congregation, in our community and in the greater world.