
Stewardships

D&C 69:5

A stewardship within the Church is the responsibility to administer or attend to an assignment or calling. In this revelation, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith, “My servants who are abroad in the earth should send forth the accounts of their stewards to the land of Zion” (D&C 69:5). With this as the directive, it has been presumed that in order to fulfill a stewardship, accountability is required. For example, auxiliary teachers report to their presidencies, bishops report to stake presidents, apostles report to the First Presidency, etc. Accountability is part of stewardship but not the full purpose.

President Russell M. Nelson spoke of “Five A’s of Stewardship,” prefacing his remarks with the story of “officiating in the nightly ritual of getting our little children to bed.” After listening to his directions to “pick up your clothes, put away your toys, brush your teeth,” his five-year-old daughter asked, “Daddy, do you own me?” That simple question caused President Nelson to carefully consider what constitutes a stewardship. He concluded that there are five elements to stewardship:

1. Acknowledge that God lives, that He is our creator and provider of all that sustains life.
2. Recognize the Lord is the author of the principle of stewardship.
3. Fulfill a stewardship in the Lord’s way.
4. “Render an account of [your] stewardship, both in time and in eternity” (D&C 72:3).
5. In the Parable of the Ten Talents, the effective steward received a greater reward or approbation. The ineffective steward was asked to yield his stewardship (see Luke 19:12–27). The Lord promised that for fulfilling a stewardship, “a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life” (D&C 51:19).¹

¹ Russell M. Nelson, “The Five A’s of Stewardship,” a talk given at the area conference in Manchester, England, August 27, 1971.

Bishop Richard C. Edgley in his April 2009 general conference address told the story of President Thomas S. Monson asking a retired executive about his stewardship—

“Ed, what are you doing in the Church?” He replied, “I have the best assignment in the ward. My responsibility is to help men who are unemployed find permanent employment. This year I have helped 12 of my brethren who were out of work to obtain good jobs. I have never been happier in my entire life.”

President Monson continued, “Short in stature, ‘Little Ed,’ as we affectionately called him, stood tall that evening as his eyes glistened and his voice quivered. He showed his love by helping those in need. He restored human dignity. He opened doors for those who knew not how to do so themselves.”²

² Richard C. Edgley, “This Is Your Phone Call,” *Ensign* (May 2009).