

# THE FOUR PILLARS OF PARISH STEWARDSHIP



## **HOSPITALITY + PRAYER + FORMATION + SERVICE**

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**HOSPITALITY:** We strive to extend a warm, hospitable and loving welcome to all who join us in worship, service, study, social, or in times of personal need. We assist our parish community in presenting a visible sign of Christ's loving kindness in all we do.

*"When I was a stranger, you welcomed me."* (Mt. 25:35). Jesus Christ teaches that whenever we welcome one of the least of our sisters and brothers, we welcome Christ Himself.

Parishioners of a stewardship parish seek to see the face of Christ in one another. With special vigilance, parishioners must seek out and welcome new members to the parish family. A stewardship parish is a welcoming parish regardless of the parish demographics: large or small - urban, suburban or rural.

### **Building Blocks:**

- Pastor
- Pastoral Planning
- Invitation
- Called By Name
- Communication
- Social Activities
- Empowerment
- RCIA

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Is our parish a welcoming and hospitable place of worship? How are new parishioners welcomed into our parish family? Do long-standing members of our parish feel welcome and involved?
2. Using the building blocks listed above, how can our parish extend hospitality and welcome to all who come to our parish? What other building blocks might make our parish more welcoming to parishioners?
3. Does the role of hospitality and welcome fall into each of the goals and objectives of the mission of our parish?

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**PRAYER:** We grow as disciples who are committed to prayer—individual and communal prayer, public and private prayer. Through prayer we are invited to draw closer to Jesus and to imitate Him in our daily lives. While Eucharist is central to our spiritual life, other prayer opportunities are made available.

A stewardship parish strives to nourish the soul through prayer. *“Prayer is as necessary to our souls as food is to our bodies.”* (*Characteristics of a Christian Steward*). Prayer and the sacraments dispose a soul to receive God’s abundant graces, which are necessary to grow in holiness. It is through prayer that we nurture our personal relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### Building Blocks:

- Pastor
- Pastoral Planning
- Holiness
- Sacraments
- Liturgy
- Gratitude
- Conversion
- Virtues

### Reflection Questions:

1. Is our parish a place of prayer? Is it evident to you that the directions and decisions of the parish are guided by a deep prayer life of the parish community?
2. What can our parish do to help yourself and others make prayer a greater priority?
3. What ideas do you have to strengthen each building block listed above to lead parishioners within our parish to deeper prayer?

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**FORMATION:** We strive to educate, form and sustain the stewardship way of life for all ages through faith formation opportunities in the parish and school. We strive to be disciple stewards and give good example as we participate in parish life in ministries and on parish leadership teams. We are open to the continuous conversion to a life of stewardship - to sharing what one has with a loving, generous and grateful heart.

As the steward grows in the life of prayer, God reveals Himself more intimately in this personal relationship. The steward also sees that the gifts received from God are to be shared and not buried. The steward remains deeply rooted in humility, recognizing that the gifts one has been given come not from self, but from God. Those gifts are to be shared with others. Here lies the heart of the steward's personal response as a disciple – to share what one has received and to share with a generous, grateful and loving heart.

### **Building Blocks:**

- Pastor
- Stewardship Committee
- Witness Talks
- Pastoral Planning
- Need Identification
- Parish Ministries
- Catechesis
- Volunteers
- Youth
- Evaluation

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Reflect how the pillar of prayer relates to the pillar of formation. Does this connection manifest itself within our parish?
2. What ideas might you have to strengthen the building blocks listed above for deeper faith formation in our parishioners?
3. Do the mission, vision, objectives and goals of our parish include enough emphasis upon faith formation of parishioners? If not, in what area(s) in the parish does greater faith formation need to occur?

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**SERVICE:** We strive to be servant ministers to the need of our parish members, the wider community and Church. We strive to serve compassionately those who are hurting or in need, lost or alone, or suffering in any way. We give thanks to God for all the gifts we have received and we celebrate the special events in the lives of parishioners.

Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives. *“God so constructed the body, that there may be no dissension in the body, but that all the members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy.”* (1 Cor. 12: 24b, 25-26)

### **Building Blocks:**

- Pastor
- Pastoral Planning
- Renewal
- Parish Ministries
- Youth
- Volunteers
- Evaluation

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What are some ways Jesus lives his teaching, *“I have come not to be served, but to serve?”*
2. In what ways in your life have you personally experienced joy and satisfaction in giving of self to another without condition or expecting repayment?
3. As a parishioner, what ideas might you have for establishing or strengthening the building blocks listed above to promote greater service in our parish?