



Resources Philosophy

Introduction

AT THE AUSTIN STONE COMMUNITY CHURCH, we endeavor to manage our resources faithfully and with excellence. When we are talking about the “resources” of the church, we are referring to the money, assets, and people the church utilizes in order to execute its mission. Money refers to spending the available financial resources (available cash, future income projections, debt financing) that God provides in order to advance the purposes of the church. Assets provide the opportunity to employ and manage three types of tangible resources:

physical property, real property, and intellectual property. People are our most important area of stewardship of our resources.

In thinking this way, we must consider the time and capacity of the church’s leadership: What ministry priorities and initiatives should we work on, and when? We must also consider the time and capacity of the church’s congregation: What would we ask our people to do, and when? What should we communicate to our body?

Resource Values

GOD ENTRUSTS RESOURCES to us for the work of the church. It is crucial for the unity and effectiveness of our leadership in the church that we all operate on the same values for how we view and manage these resources. Without them, it can be difficult to rationalize or understand the resource decisions that affect us most directly, and it can be challenging for us to trust the resource decisions that others make. As we strive for faithfulness and excellence in managing the resources of our church, we seek to hold in tension three theologically-derived values: **mission**, **stewardship**, and **blessing**.

to be creative, innovative, and even risk-taking in our boldness to live out the gospel and to present the gospel to the world. This is reflective of the theological convictions that God entrusts us with much for Him to work through us. His desire is that we accomplish much for His name and His glory with what He has entrusted, and our greatest joy is in serving Him as we do so (Matthew 25:20-21). He graciously works through us and the resources He entrusts us to direct as a means of accomplishing His purposes, for His glory (Philippians 1:6, 2:13).

Mission

The Austin Stone’s mission is to love God, love the church, love the city, and love the nations. Valuing this mission compels us to dream big dreams and

Stewardship

We value the careful and responsible management of church resources. Valuing stewardship helps us be wise and foresighted in operating within God-given constraints, while continuing to strategically grow

in our effectiveness in this mission over a sustained period of time. This is reflective of the theological convictions that God resources His plans while He wisely limits ours. In His wisdom, God uses His provision of resources to enable the best plans for our activities (Acts 17:26-27). In His wisdom, God uses His provision of resources to establish the best limits to our activities (Proverbs 16:9).

For instance, we do not believe that permanent buildings are always the right solution. Conversely, we also do not think that temporary buildings are always the right solution. Rather, using our philosophy of resources, we seek to hold these three theologically-derived values—mission, stewardship, and blessing—in tension.

Blessing

We serve and give generously to others, because we serve the God who has given us everything. God possesses an infinite reserve of all that is good, and

He has given us an abundant apportionment. He desires for us to graciously share this with the body of Christ in our church and with the world around us, so that the name of Christ would be worshipped. As a church staff, we are related together in the family of God, not employees and an employer engaged in a transactional relationship. We are shepherds and flock, not hired hands working under compulsion and out of duty alone. This is reflective of the theological convictions that the abundance of God is ours in Christ. In Christ, we are heirs to all that belongs to God, and there is no scarcity and no end to the abundance of God's riches (Luke 15:31, Ephesians 1:3). Additionally, the independence of God underscores His grace to us. God does not need us or our resources for everything is His, yet He generously entrusts us with everything we have (Psalms 24:1-2, Acts 17:24-25). Finally, God's people have a joyful role in generosity for His purposes, for it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians 9:8-8).

Resource Principles

1. The abundance of God is ours in Christ

In Christ, we are heirs to all that belongs to God, and there is no scarcity nor end to the abundance of God's riches. He is a good Father who gives good gifts to His children to remind us of how gracious He is.

- “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours...’” (Luke 15:31)

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places... (Ephesians 1:3)

2. The independence of God underscores His grace to us

God does not need us or our resources, for everything is His. Yet He generously entrusts us with everything we have.

- The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (Psalm 24:1-2)
- The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (Acts 17:24-25)

3. God entrusts us with much

His desire is that we accomplish much for His name and His glory with what He has entrusted to us, and our greatest joy is in serving Him as we do so.

- “And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’” (Matthew 25:20-21)

4. God works through us

He graciously works through us and the resources He entrusts us to direct as a means of accomplishing His purposes, for His glory.

- And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

- ... for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)

5. God resources His plans

In His wisdom, God uses His provision of resources to enable the best plans for our activities.

- And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)
- And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

6. God wisely limits our plans

In His wisdom, God uses His provision of resources to establish the best limits to our activities.

- And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. (Acts 17:26-27)
- The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

7. God's people have a joyful role in generosity for these purposes

God uses the faithful and joyful generosity of all of His people to provide these resources for the mission, stewardship, and blessing of the church, and to provide benefit and blessing in the joy of giving.

- In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35)
- Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)