



Who Should Direct the Charitable Giving?

Scott Talbot - June 2022

I often encounter families who are committed to carrying on their charitable giving beyond this lifetime. They are passionate about the ministries they support and have chosen them carefully as wise stewards. Often these families are specific about the organizations they wish to support through their estate plans and even the impact they wish to make.

Occasionally, however, these families will earmark funds for ministry but choose not to identify the ministries they wish to support. Instead, they choose to allow their children or others to select those ministries as well as the designations for those gifts.

One reason that is often given for this decision is that the parents want to engage their children in the process of giving. They hope that, by overseeing these distributions, their children will learn generosity and will become more charitable with their funds.

Inviting children and grandchildren to participate in your generosity is a great way to disciple the next generation. Many feel that this is best accomplished while the parents are still living so that they can provide some oversight in directing those funds. However, when giving children total freedom to direct these gifts after death, the parents forgo the joy of anticipating how directed giving might further bind their children's hearts to ministries long held dear.

God entrusts His resources to stewards, and we stewards are called to account for the way in which we use, manage, or invest those resources. If we want to be found worthy of the Master's praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant," we need to be sure that we are investing those resources in ways that please the Master.

We are accountable for the way in which we steward resources that God has entrusted to us. And our children are accountable for the way in which they steward resources that God entrusts to them. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each of us as stewards to direct those funds in a way that we believe will please the Master.

If we want to be found worthy as good stewards, we must be active and not passive in the role God has given each of us. We should pray for wisdom, seek counsel, perform due diligence, and make responsible decisions. Taking this approach may be the most effective way to teach stewardship to the next generation.

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