“Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.”
— 1 Peter 4:8

When we talk about stewardship in the church, we often talk about money, buildings, time, talents, creation, mission, and ministry. And, to be fair, we should. These are all gifts entrusted to us. They matter.

But lately, I’ve been wondering if we sometimes move too quickly past one of the most sacred forms of stewardship: the stewardship of relationships.

Not just having relationships. Not just appreciating them in theory. Not just assuming they will still be there when we finally have a slower week, a clearer inbox, or a better version of ourselves to offer.

Actually stewarding them.

I do not mean this as a critique of the Church, or as some sweeping statement about how communities fail to care for one another. I mean it more personally than that. I have been reflecting on the relationships I have taken for granted.

As a son of three, a father of two, and a husband of one, I am mindful of how easily I can neglect relationships not because I do not care, but because I assume my care is already obvious. I assume my love is “a given.” I assume my admiration has already been communicated. I assume my need for others is understood. I assume my gratitude is implied.

And maybe sometimes it is.

But maybe love that is only assumed can become quieter than we intend. Maybe gratitude that is only implied can leave people wondering. Maybe admiration that is never spoken can become one of those gifts we meant to give but left wrapped in the corner.

Stewardship, at its heart, is the faithful tending of what has been entrusted to us. And what has been entrusted to us more personally, more vulnerably, and more mysteriously than the people we love?

Relationships are living things. They require attention, patience, confession, laughter, repair, forgiveness, and sometimes the simple willingness to say what we think should already be known.

I love you.

I’m thankful for you.

I admire you.

I need you.

I’m sorry.

I see you.

Those are not dramatic words, but they can be holy ones.

In 1 Peter, the invitation to “maintain constant love” does not sound passive. It sounds like care that is practiced, not merely possessed. It sounds like love that is tended, not just felt. It sounds like love that becomes a discipline, a rhythm, a way of living.

Perhaps stewarding relationships begins there: not with guilt over what we have failed to say, but with gratitude for the chance to say it now.

To call: To text. To write the note. To ask the better question. To listen without preparing the next response. To stop assuming the people we serve already know everything we mean.

Today, I'm wondering: How are we stewarding the relationships in our lives? In our churches? In our homes? In our communities?

My prayer is that God's love, as in love for us, and as in the gift of love we are blessed to share with one another, is not something I take for granted this week.

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