

October 21, 2014

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

Many years ago, when Susan and I were first married and began attending church, we were trying to figure out how much to pledge to the church. So, I asked Susan how much her parents pledged. They were faithful Episcopalians who attended church every Sunday, and Susan's mother was the Administrative Assistant for the Rector. If anyone knew about pledging, it would be her parents.

"They figure out how much they spend on alcohol every year, add 10%, and that's their pledge."

I was stunned. I just couldn't believe it. That didn't seem like a great way to figure out how much to give to God.

Not long after that, our rector asked a very important question during one of his sermons: How does God rank in your life?

If you want to know, he said, look at your checkbook. See how much money you spend on different things. What you spend your money on says a lot about what is important to you. Do that, and see where God ranks.

Susan and I were working on our budget anyway, and we decided to try what the rector said. When we did, we discovered a huge disconnect in our lives. While God was always very important to us (I did go on to get ordained), we were not contributing an equally important amount of money to God's work in the world. We were shocked. And, it hurt.

Ever since, we have tried to do better. We try giving back to God in a way that reflects what God means to us. God has blessed us in so many, many ways that we want to thank God by sharing our many blessings, and over the years, our giving has grown, until now, it more accurately reflects how we feel.

Which leads me to ask: How does God rank in your life?

See you in church,
Andrew