



# *Becoming Faithful Stewards of God's Gifts*

**A study that considers safety and security  
as an act of faithful stewardship**



**from The GuideOne Center for Risk Management**

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## INTRODUCTION

Leaders in the church have an awesome responsibility. God has called them to oversee, preach, exhort, administer, heal, encourage, and call people to acts of faith.

But just who are the leaders? Yes, they are the pastors and priests. They are the elders and deacons. They are the business administrators, youth pastors, children's coordinators, office managers, choir directors and volunteers.

But they are also the parents, and members. They are anyone who feels responsible for preserving the faith. They are those who feel a sense of responsibility to care for all of God's creation. Leaders are those who recognize that the people, resources, and facilities that are given for the furtherance of the kingdom should be cared for, protected, and preserved so they can achieve being able to bless God.

Safety and security is an act of faith. Too often we fail to recognize this. We sometimes come to believe that as long as we are being faithful and religious, we don't need to be wise and cautious. But this simply is not based on what we read in Scriptures. There are many stories of God's faithful being warned of trouble or danger. Sometimes they followed the warnings and were spared. Other times they chose to do otherwise, and the results were normally not good.

In many churches in this country, little if anything is being done to care for the people, resources, and facilities that have been given in faith to the work of the church. In other places, a few guidelines or policies are in place, but there are many gaps, leaving openings for bad things to happen. But in some churches, the tide has changed. The leadership has recognized that not only can safety, security, and risk management be done without compromising ministry, but that safeguarding God's people and resources can actually enhance ministry. By being intentional in the safeguarding business, congregations find that not only are people attracted to the ministry, but the ministry can more easily be sustained and remain healthy, as fewer accidents, injuries, claims, and/or lawsuits result.

This brief study is designed to look at several passages that point to the need to be involved in safety and security. The hope is that these passages and study time will spur you on to be a person and a church that takes seriously the call to be faithful stewards of all of God's gifts and resources.

We hope you will use the passages and questions as a basis for discussion and ultimately a commitment to develop a comprehensive risk management approach for your religious organization.

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This material is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to give specific legal or risk management advice, nor are any suggested checklists or actions plans intended to include or address all possible risk management exposures or solutions. You are encouraged to retain your own expert consultants and legal advisors in order to develop a risk management plan specific to your own activities. For more information, contact the GuideOne Center for Risk Management at (877) 448-4331, ext. 5118 for Church and Schools, or ext. 5175 for Senior Living Communities.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Please read the passage aloud, and then use the questions to facilitate discussion.  
Note: All passages are from the *NIV Bible*.

1. Job 11:18

*"You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety."*

- a. How important is it for people to feel secure in their surroundings?
- b. What happens to people's ability to achieve when they do not feel secure?

2. Psalm 7:9

*"O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure."*

- a. Why do you think people are wicked?
- b. Violence often stems from wicked people. Is it possible that this violence could possibly enter into a religious facility?

3. Psalm 30:6

*"When I felt secure, I said, 'I will never be shaken.'"*

- a. What can happen to God's people when they feel secure?
- b. If security means we can confidently say, "I will not be shaken," what is the inverse of this? How does that impact the body of the faithful?

## 4. Psalm 122:7

*"May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."*

- a. The people of God came to worship and felt safe and secure. If people stopped feeling safe and secure, how might that impact their worship?
- b. Can we provide safety and security without adopting a fortress mentality? How so?

## 5. Jeremiah 6:1

*"Flee for safety, people of Benjamin! Flee from Jerusalem! Sound the trumpet in Tekoa! Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem! For disaster looms out of the north, even terrible destruction."*

- a. Whose job is it in the church to warn the faithful that they might be in danger?
- b. In today's society, what dangers have you heard of that could threaten the church?

## 6. Jeremiah 22:21

*"I warned you when you felt secure, but you said, 'I will not listen.'"*

- a. Do you believe some people have a false sense of security and think that nothing could happen within their organization?
- b. What could be the consequences to an organization that does not heed the warning of one of its leaders?

## 7. Jeremiah 42:19

*"O remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Be sure of this: I warn you today."*

- a. What was the response to Jeremiah when he warned the people not to go to Egypt? (see Jer. 43:2) Will all of God's people be receptive to warning?
- b. If some people respond negatively to warnings, what should the faithful response be?

## 8. Ezekiel 3:19

*“But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.”*

- a. Sometimes wicked people come into the fellowship of believers. What could be the result of wicked people being able to go unchecked within the congregation?
- b. By taking action against wickedness and wicked people, what does this passage say the result will be for us?

## 9. Ezekiel 33:6

*“But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.”*

- a. In the life of the church, what people would you identify as the “watchmen?”
- b. If the watchmen fail to warn the rest of the people, how will the watchmen be viewed?

## 10. Hebrews 11:7

*“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.”*

- a. What prompted Noah to build the ark? What role did faith play?
- b. Sometimes the threats are small. Other times they can be very large. Discuss both the small and large threats to the church and what could happen if nothing was done.

## 11. Acts 20:28-31a

*“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”*

- a. Who was being spoken to in this passage from Acts? Who was Paul exhorting them to care for?
- b. Who are the modern day wolves? Where does this passage say they might come from? Looking at this passage, what is your challenge as a leader of the church?

Threats to the ministry that you do can be real. They may be threats that invade from outside the church, such as a robber or thief. The threats may also come from within at the hands of a child molester or embezzler. The threat to your safety and security may also come from neglect, oversight, or ignorance, such as a fire, dangerous walkway or playground, or an unsupervised or poorly planned activity. Regardless of where the threats come from, it is the Church's responsibility to take whatever steps necessary, within reason, to ensure the safety and security of God's people, resources, and facilities. To do so is a faithful act of stewardship.

## CLOSING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel enough emphasis is given to safety and security in your organization?
2. Do you have a safety and security team (or committee) in place?
3. If you are a leader, do you communicate often about safety and security practices?
4. Discuss what steps you need to take to elevate awareness, education, preparation and response to potential threats to your organization's ministry.

As seen in the passages above, there have always been threats to the community of the faithful. Doing God's business sometimes has risks attached to it. But it is the responsibility of all the leaders we named at the beginning of this study to become informed, stay alert, be on guard, plan, and be ready to respond to any threats to the ministry of the church.

To do this, you will need help. That's where the GuideOne Center for Risk Management and your agent come in. We stand ready to provide the resources you need to begin and maintain the process. Once we establish this relationship, over time we will help you weave safety and security into the fabric of your organization without sacrificing ministry. In fact, these measures will help you have a deeper and longer impact on the people and world you are reaching out to serve.

For more helpful church safety and security information,  
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