

## Food Bowl Etiquette

*By a dog-loving steward in our diocese, who prefers to remain anonymous.*

I recently adopted a new puppy and we have begun attending obedience classes together.

One of our homework exercises is called “food bowl etiquette”. The way to teach proper food bowl etiquette is by hand feeding our puppies for one meal per day. When it is meal time, instead of dumping the food directly in the bowl and just letting the puppy go after it, we are to take handfuls of the kibbles and let our pet eat directly from our hands.

Now you may wonder what we are teaching our dogs with this activity and more importantly what does this have to do with stewardship?

This lesson is meant to teach my pet that the food in his bowl is actually MINE and I am graciously sharing it with him. This will help to eliminate the inclination to be possessive of his food bowl as some dogs are. In fact, some dogs are SO possessive that if you come near their bowl they will snap at you or growl. I am hoping to teach the pet not to get upset or aggressive if I choose to touch his food. It truly belongs to me anyway and he receives it from my loving hands.

Perhaps all of us should have been introduced to this type of logic during our formative years. Maybe we would have learned at an early age that everything we possess, we have been given by our Master.

All too often, we as adults are so protective of our time, talents, and treasure, that if we are asked to share it, we act as if someone were trying to steal from us what we truly do not even own. We forget we have been given all that we have.

Maybe we should ask ourselves if we are behaving like poorly trained dogs, or like someone who truly understands that we are only stewards of someone else’s goods. Do we snap at anyone who suggests we give something back to our master? Since we didn’t see anyone put the food in the bowl do we forget that someone placed it there for us?

Perhaps we could all use a lesson in “food bowl etiquette”.