



NEWSLETTER



LESSONS FROM BEES ABOUT STEWARDSHIP



FABASA
FAMILY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA





STEWARDSHIP

lessons from

BEES

The year that has passed now lies behind us like a freshly ploughed field with furrows full of memories. Some memories are as sweet as honey; others may carry scars.

For family farms, there may have been seasons of abundance with good rains or loss due to drought.

Good rains are like good profits, while drought may mean a decline in business. But this, after all, is the rhythm of life and of business.



Bees teach us significant lessons about stewardship. When God created the earth, in His infinite wisdom, He also created the bees, not merely as small buzzing creatures, but as secret bearers of life. Their wings, like soft prayers, keep the dance of pollination alive - an invisible thread that connects fruit and seed, field and orchard, humanity and nature.

God knew that we could never live without them; that their presence is the unseen key to survival. Without the bees, the world would quietly wither, and so He sent them as stewards of His creation: delicate and faithful, so that humankind would not forget how dependent we are on good stewards.

Let me explain it through the eyes of a farmer. In the early morning stillness, when mist lies like a thin blanket over the fields and the sounds of a waking farm fill the air, James sits on his porch, his hat in his hands, his eyes lifted to the

heavens. He is not praying for rain, not today. Today, his prayer is for something much smaller. He prays for bees.



James knows something that much of the world beyond agriculture may not realise, that more than 70% of the crops people eat - apples, almonds, melons, avocados, sunflowers, and many others - depend on pollination. And that bees, those delicate creatures with their golden stripes and sacred purpose, perform 90% of that pollination. Without them, there is no harvest. Without

them, there is no food on the table, no seed for tomorrow.

Bees come to a farmer's vineyards and fields without fanfare. No marching, no flags, no announcements. Only that soft, busy hum, like a song only the earth can hear. And yet, in their quiet presence lives a truth every person should remember: bees are the purest example of stewardship.

They take nothing that is not needed. They do not steal from the flower; they do not destroy what grows. They give back, multiply, restore. Wherever they fly, life is planted. Pollen becomes a seed, seed becomes fruit, fruit becomes harvest. Every movement of a bee is a signature of balance. They do not work for themselves alone. The honey they gather feeds the colony; the pollination they create feeds the world.

It is in their selflessness, their cooperation, their faithfulness to a task greater than themselves, that their true greatness



lies. A bee lives only a few weeks, and yet its impact is timeless. They work toward something they will never see themselves in, but which their offspring and the world around them will depend on to survive.

That is what a steward does. Not because someone is watching, not for fame or reward, but with the awareness that what has been entrusted to us is only lent for the time we are here. The bees know this and live it. God created the bees before He created humankind, so that we might learn that everything He made forms part of a greater plan.

Let us learn lessons about stewardship through the tasks of the bees - not only as workers in nature, but as silent teachers, sent by God Himself to show us what true stewardship means. Every task is a lesson. Every movement is a metaphor.

Pollination

They travel from flower to flower, not for themselves, but for the survival of thousands of plant species. They teach us: with every touch, let life remain behind. True stewards bring growth wherever they go.



Honey-making



From the nectar of creation, they produce something perfect, a source of energy, healing, and strength. They teach us: use what you receive with wisdom and gratitude. Do not waste. Do not only take, but create.

Colony Cooperation



No bee works alone. They live for one another, work for one another, and die for one another if necessary. They teach us: stewardship is never a solo effort. It demands cooperation, sacrifice, and loyalty.

Guarding the Hive



The guard bees protect the entrance with their lives. They teach us: protect what is sacred, your family, your heritage, your values. Be vigilant against anything that threatens your legacy.



The Dance of Guidance



When a bee discovers a new source of nectar, it dances to show the others the way. They teach us: share wisdom. Lead with joy. Show others where the good lies, without keeping it for yourself.

Seasonal Preparation



They gather what is needed for winter long before it arrives. They teach us to plan. Foresight is part of responsibility. Build today for tomorrow.

Recognising Role and Place



Every bee has a task - queen, worker, and others - and each serves with devotion. They teach us: know you're calling. Honour your role. No task is too small if it serves the bigger picture.

The Year Ahead

The new year lies before us like an unplanted field full of possibilities, but also responsibilities. As stewards of land, of family, and of faith, we are called to plant wisely. Not only seeds in the soil, but seeds in people's hearts.

A family business's success is not measured only by profit and loss. It is a school of values where children learn how

their parents react under pressure, how they handle conflict, and how decisions are made. It is in those daily moments, in how we speak, listen, and forgive, that we leave our deepest footprints.

Therefore, we should not only ask questions about yield and prices, but also about our relationships with family and employees. Stewardship does not only mean to preserve something. It also means to improve what has been entrusted to us.

FIVE TIPS TO BEGIN THE YEAR WITH A GOOD ATTITUDE

1. Begin with gratitude.

Take time to look back and thank God — not only for what went well, but also for what helped you grow through difficulty. Gratitude changes perspective; it shifts focus from negative to positive.



2. See people.

In the rush of work, we sometimes forget that people are our greatest asset. Greet sincerely. Listen attentively. Show respect. That is how trust grows.

3. Let go of what does not serve you.

Do not carry old issues, grudges, or disappointments into the new year. Forgiveness is not weakness — it is an act of liberation.

4. Build bridges, not walls.

In every family and community, there are differences. Seek common ground. Speak honestly, but gently. Let peace be a greater goal than being “right.”

5. Live your values intentionally.

Faith, honesty, respect, and humility are not just words. They are the seeds of a lasting legacy. Your children and grandchildren learn not only from what you say, but from what you do.

Footprints that Remain

Ultimately, no one measures the success of a family business merely by its profits, but also by how many hearts it has touched. The true harvest lies in the peace in our homes, the cooperation between generations, and the awareness that we are part of something greater - an inheritance of faith and perseverance

May this new year be a time of peace, wisdom, and renewal for every family enterprise. May we learn to give with open hands, to listen with soft hearts, and to work with steadfast faith. May we realise that we are not owners, but stewards of all that belongs to God.

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In the coming year we will focus on Protection of Wealth