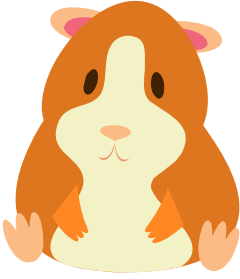


# THE PET



*“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’. So God created humankind in his image. . .” Gen. 1:26-27 NRSV*

Many of us love animals. Some of us even want to live with them. Hence, the pet. Pets are wonderful companions for older people or people who live by themselves. Pets may be the only real live interaction and affection some experience. They are also entertaining, protective, compassionate and curious.

Because we have an emotional link with our pets, we don't always exercise good stewardship of judgment when it comes to decisions relative to our fine furry and feathered friends. Like other important decisions we make, we must remember to move slowly and do our research! Think before you act:

*Why do you want a pet to begin with?* Please don't say it's to teach your children responsibility.

*What kind of pet do you want? Why?* I hear birds are good conversationalists!

*What kind of pet can you afford?* AH! Here's the kicker. A puppy with long hair will set you back about \$65 each month! And that doesn't include the purchase price. Lizards may cost less than \$10 each month, but they're not real cuddly. Then there are toys, beds, visits to the vet - I knew a beagle once who ate an entire tube of Super Glue. He now lives at the doggie farm.

Of course, it's usually against the law to keep the really exotic pets – When they grow up, cougars and bear cubs may not know the difference between your toddler and lunch. So know what the law says. Oh, and stay away from the malls when you are considering a dog or cat.

So it's Spring Time, and you want to share your home with one of God's wonderful creatures. They bring so much joy and happiness into our homes, ah, go ahead, but just remember to be a good steward BEFORE you bring your new friend home as well as afterward.