

Stewardship (Week 1) | 6.14.26

Key Outcomes

Ephesians Church launched a new 7-week sermon series on **stewardship**, establishing that God owns everything and believers are managers of His resources—including time, money, talents, and relationships ¹ ². The church announced a **7-week corporate fast** (June 15 - August 3) using a rotating 3-team structure to maintain continuous 24-hour prayer coverage ³ ⁴. Members are called to recognize God's complete sovereignty, steward resources according to biblical principles, and prepare for increased community impact ² ⁵.

Core Teaching: Biblical Stewardship

Definition and Foundation

- **Stewardship** is the careful, responsible, and ethical management of something entrusted to your care ⁵
- God owns the earth and everything in it; believers own only their decisions ⁶ ⁷
- Decisions determine eternal destiny—either a mansion in heaven or the lake of fire ⁶

Scriptural Framework

- Psalm 24:1: "The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belongs to the Lord" ⁷
- Psalm 89:11: God founded the heavens, earth, and everything in them ⁸
- Psalm 115:16: God gave the earth to humans for temporary stewardship ⁸
- James 4:13-17: Believers must say "if the Lord wills" rather than presuming tomorrow exists ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹

Time as a Gift

- Psalm 90:12: "Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom" ¹²
- Ephesians 5:15-17: "Pay careful attention to how you live... making the most of the time, because the days are evil" ¹³ ¹⁴
- Human life is a vapor that appears briefly then vanishes ¹⁰

- Time exists for humanity's benefit; God operates beyond time 12

Parable of the Talents Application

Matthew 25:14-30 Breakdown

- Master gave talents (large sums of money) to three servants according to their abilities 15
- Two servants invested and doubled their resources; one hid his talent in fear 16
- The faithful servants received praise: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge of many things" 17
- The fearful servant was called "evil and lazy" and cast into outer darkness 18 19

Practical Implications

- Believers must work with what God provides and watch Him multiply the results 20
- The servant with one talent suffered from a **poverty mindset**—hoarding rather than sowing 16 21
- Not sowing what God gives is equivalent to robbing Him 21
- Community wisdom is essential; isolation leads to poor stewardship 19 20

Financial Stewardship Principles

Giving as First Priority

- First transaction after receiving income should be tithes and offerings to God 22
- Bank statements reveal where hearts truly are—most money goes to shopping, food, or rent rather than kingdom purposes 23 24
- Matthew 6:21: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" 25
- Malachi's warning: withholding tithes is robbing God 21

God's Provision Promise

- God takes care of His own; worrying about provision shows forgotten trust 7 26
- Believers should pray for assignments, not jobs—God provides for His assignments 26

- Tithing and offering from one job may eliminate the need for multiple jobs 22
- Every good and perfect gift comes from above (James 1:17) 27

Church Financial Transparency

- Pastor explicitly asked non-givers to prayerfully consider supporting the ministry 28
- Funds needed for technology, future building, and expanded community outreach 29
- Leadership emphasized the church is not greedy and handles resources responsibly 29

7-Week Corporate Fast Details

Structure and Timing

- **Duration:** June 15 to August 3 (49 days) 3
- **Format:** Water-only fast with rotating 3-team coverage 30
- **Goal:** Maintain unbroken 24-hour prayer coverage for entire 7 weeks 30

Team Participation Options

- **Option 1:** Full 24-hour water-only fast on assigned team day 31
- **Option 2:** Split coverage with teammates if medical limitations exist (e.g., one person fasts 8am-8pm, another 8pm-8am) 31 32
- Personal fasting commitments beyond the team schedule are encouraged 32

Sign-Up and Communication

- Members must sign up via the Ephesians Church app under "Upcoming Events" → "Prayer and Fasting Team Sign Up" 4 33
- Excel sheet with team rosters will be posted on the app for coordination 33
- Calendar on app shows which team fasts each day (Team A, B, or C rotation) 34
- Spontaneous Zoom prayer nights will be announced via app alerts 29

Spiritual Expectations

- Fasting without prayer and Word reading is just weight loss, not spiritual discipline 29 35
- Fast will produce clarity, breakthrough, and increased Holy Spirit sensitivity 36

- Community unity through coordinated effort will demonstrate power 36

Prayer Exercise: Scripture-Based Intercession

The service included training on praying scripture over specific needs rather than generic requests 37 38 :

Demonic Altars

- Bind and loose (Matthew 10:1—power over unclean spirits) 38
- Spirit of truth to expose enemy activity 38
- Ephesians 1:17—spirit of wisdom and revelation to see what the enemy is doing 38

Men Arising

- Ezekiel 37—speak to dry bones to live 39
- "Who the Son sets free is free indeed" 39

Overcoming People-Pleasing and Negative Speech

- Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" 39
- Psalm 51: "Create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me" 39
- Proverbs 29:25: "Those who fear the Lord are secure" 40

Gratitude

- Psalm 118:24: "This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it" 40
- "Give thanks to the Lord for His steadfast love" 40
- "His praise shall forever be on my lips" 41

Discouragement

- Isaiah 61:3: Put on the spirit of praise for the garment of heaviness 41
- "God is present, He will strengthen and uphold you" 42
- 2 Timothy 1:7: "I do not operate in the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind" 42
- Matthew 28:20: "I'll be with you to the ends of the age" 42

Pastoral Transparency and Repentance

Personal Accountability

- Pastor Freddie publicly repented for feeling frustrated with his family before service due to perceived lack of preparation 37 43
- Emphasized he cannot minister with unclean hands or unresolved frustration 37 43
- Acknowledged taking God's business seriously while needing to operate in grace 37 43

Teaching Conviction

- Expressed passionate hatred for the devil after family member was scammed regarding a job opportunity 44 45
- Shared humorous story about accidentally using profanity in front of 2-year-old daughter Chloe, who repeated it 45
- Teaches with intensity because of deep opposition to the enemy's work 46

Worship and Community Culture

Old Hymns and Songs

- Church sang traditional songs: "This Is the Day," "What a Mighty God We Serve" 47 48 49
- Pastor celebrated that the young church knows old songs, calling it "the one" 49
- Worship was described as "out of note, out of tune, and out of breath, but praise the name" 1

Church Identity

- Church is an **organism, not just an organization**—a living, breathing, growing thing 9 14
- Focus on community over branding, timing, or merchandise 9
- Comfortable, family-style atmosphere with children present during service 14

Upcoming Events

- **House Fires:** This Friday 35

- **Water Baptisms:** Friday (same day as House Fires) 50
- **New Members Dinner:** June 28 50
- New members instructed to check email and fill out forms 35 50

Decisions Made

- Launch 7-week stewardship sermon series starting with foundational teaching on God's ownership 1 2
- Implement 7-week corporate fast with 3-team rotating structure to maintain continuous prayer 3 4
- Shift church giving appeals from thanking current givers to inviting non-givers to participate 28
- Prioritize community impact, technology upgrades, and future building needs 29

Action Items

- **All members:** Sign up for fast teams via app "Upcoming Events" tab by end of Sunday 4 33
- **Leadership:** Post Excel sheet with team rosters on app tonight 33
- **New members:** Check email and complete membership forms before June 28 dinner 35 50
- **All participants:** Coordinate with teammates if splitting fast hours to ensure 24-hour coverage 31 32
- **All members:** Watch for spontaneous Zoom prayer meeting alerts on app during fast 29

Key Quotes

"God is in complete and total control" 2 5

"We own nothing but our decisions" 6

"If you're worried about how something's gonna be taken care of, you're worried about the wrong thing" 26

"Work the word, don't let the world work you" 51

"The way you handle time shows your reverence to God" 52

"God takes care of His own" 26

"When you say 'I do' to marriage, you say 'I do' to everything that you are, and everything that you will be" 53 54