

Church of God

Sunday School

WHOLE-LIFE STEWARDSHIP #10 – THE HOUSE OF GOD



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Jacob worshiped the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22; Genesis 35:1-3, 9-15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** David wanted to build a temple for God to dwell in (2 Samuel 7:1-2; Psalm 132:3-5).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Hezekiah ordered the house of God cleaned and repaired (2 Chronicles 29:1-3, 16-19).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Men who failed to be good stewards of God's house (Numbers 3:3-4; 1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22-25).
- ❑ **Friday:** Today, God's people are the house of God (1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Timothy 3:5).
- ❑ **Saturday:** What stewardship of God's house includes (Psalm 122:1; Nehemiah 10:39; 1 Corinthians 11:22).

MEMORY VERSE: ". . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
—1 Timothy 3:15

What Is the House of God?

Have you ever wondered where God lives? Does He have a house? If so, what does it look like? There are Bible verses that tell us to take care of God's house. What exactly does that include? One of the first mentions of the house of God is found in the story of Jacob. After deceiving his father and hearing that his brother wanted to kill him, Jacob fled and came to "a certain place" (Genesis 28:11); he stayed there all night. While sleeping, Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven and of the Lord promising to care for him and be with him. When Jacob woke up, he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not" (Genesis 28:16). Jacob named that place "Bethel," which means "house of God." It was here that Jacob heard from God, promised to pay tithes, and built an altar to God. Can you imagine the reverence Jacob must have felt in that holy place?

Years later, King David was troubled that while he lived in a beautiful home, God's dwelling place was just a tent (tabernacle). Although God told David that Solomon was to build the temple, David did all he could to help with the preparations, including buying the land for the temple with his own money. A properly built house of God was important to King David (Psalm 132:3-5).



The Tabernacle

When Hezekiah became king, the temple had not been cared for and was in bad condition. Hezekiah had the doors repaired and the temple cleaned (2 Chronicles 29:3, 16-17). It took sixteen days to remove the garbage, clean, and purify the temple. When the temple was restored, "the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped" (2 Chronicles 29:29). They were thankful that the house of God was in good order.

Failing to Be Good Stewards of the House of God

The high priest Eli had two sons (Hopni and Phineas) who served as priests in the Old Testament tabernacle. During this time Samuel came to live with Eli and helped care for the house of God (1 Samuel 3:1). This included opening and shutting doors, lighting lamps, and singing the praises of God. Although Eli's sons served in the tabernacle, they were wicked men who "knew not the LORD" (1 Samuel 2:12). They took the best portions of the sacrifices (1 Samuel 2:13-17) and had immoral relations with the temple serving women (1 Samuel 2:22). Sadly, Eli did not stop his sons' ungodly behavior (1 Samuel 3:13). Although entrusted with God's special belongings (the tabernacle, ark of the covenant, etc.), yet, Hopni and Phineas were not respectful or careful in their management. You can read of what happened to Eli and his sons in 1 Samuel, Chapter 4. Concerning the behavior of Hopni and Phineas, God said, "They that despise me shall

be lightly esteemed [or cursed]" (1 Samuel 2:30). This was not a small thing to God.

Nadab and Abihu were two other priests who failed to have the proper respect for the house of God. These two sons of the high priest Aaron "offered strange fire before the LORD" (Numbers 3:4). They treated that which was holy with irreverence and carelessness. They disregarded God's laws concerning worship in the tabernacle. Their punishment was death (Numbers 3:4).

Under the New Testament

In the Old Testament, great emphasis was placed on the care of the temple. Today, God's people are "the temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16), the "house" of God (1 Timothy 3:5). It is no longer a literal "house" or building but "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Does that mean God is no longer concerned about how we treat our location of worship? In the Bible, some of the places God met with His people included the tabernacle in the wilderness, Solomon's temple, a synagogue, and in the New Testament, the believers often met in homes or in the "upper chamber" of a building (Acts 20:8). Today, God's people meet in church buildings, rented buildings, or in homes. Wherever your church family gathers to worship, what does God (the Owner) require of us (the managers) concerning the care of that location?



House of Worship

Jesus called the location of worship "the house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13), and James 2:2 calls it the "assembly." Many today call the place they gather to worship "church" (however, it is important to remember that God's church is a people, not a location). To be a faithful steward of this important resource, it is vital that we understand the purpose of the house of worship. God's plan is that His people gather together for worship (which includes fellowship, prayer, praise, teaching, and preaching). Hebrews 10:25 warns not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together." Since gathering together in a place of worship is in God's will, how should we care for it?

Proper stewardship includes having respect for our place of worship. What does respect in the house of worship look like? Does it include eating and drinking during the worship service (1 Corinthians 11:22)? What about leaving trash on the floor for others to clean up? Think about the chairs, songbooks, and other things that are often in your place of worship. What does faithful stewardship of those things include? Might we treat them differently when we understand that these are God's property?

Stewardship of the house of worship includes our behavior ("how thou oughtest to behave thyself"; 1 Timothy 3:15). In Matthew 21:13 Jesus was angry that "My house . . . the house of prayer" had become a "den of thieves." While some today might not be physically robbing people who come to the service, there are other ways we can rob God. During the service, do we rob Him of our attention by playing on our cell phones or talking excessively? Do we rob Him of the tithes needed to support the work of God? Do we fail to submit to those God has placed over us (Hebrews 13:17)? Do we rob Him of our presence because we are too tired or have something we would rather be doing? If so, could it be that we are poor managers of the house of worship?



The Family of God

Another aspect of stewardship of the "house of God" includes those who gather together for worship: the family of God. In Luke 7:36-50 a woman came to Simon's house and carefully washed Jesus' feet, dried them, and anointed them with precious, expensive ointment. It was customary for a homeowner to offer a guest water to wash his feet before entering a home. Simon failed to do this (verse 44), but the woman humbly met Jesus' need by washing His feet herself. In so doing, she was caring for the body of Christ. Who is the body of Christ today? Paul described God's people as "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27). How does God want us to be good stewards of His people? Are there needs in the family of God? Are there sick who need visiting, hungry who need groceries? Might there be someone who needs a card or a phone call?

When you consider that the house of worship has carefully been placed in your care to manage in the way that glorifies God, are you "glad" (Psalm 122:1) when it is time for the worship service? Do you look forward to gathering with God's people? Are you respectful of the spiritual atmosphere and the physical building (and its contents)? Can you say, as the people in Nehemiah 10:39, "We will not forsake the house of our God"?

Bible Quiz



1. What does the name "Bethel" mean? _____

2. What does the lesson tell us was important to King David? _____

3. Why were the people in the story of Hezekiah thankful? _____

4. What were some of Samuel's duties in caring for the temple? _____

5. How did Nadab and Abihu fail to have respect for the house of God? _____

6. What is the "house of God" today? _____

7. What is the purpose for the house of worship? _____

8. What does respect in the house of worship include? _____

9. What are three of the ways we could be robbing God today? _____

10. What is a way we can care for the body of Christ? _____

The House of Worship Is



**Not a Place to Attend Only
When You Feel Like It**

Scripture: _____



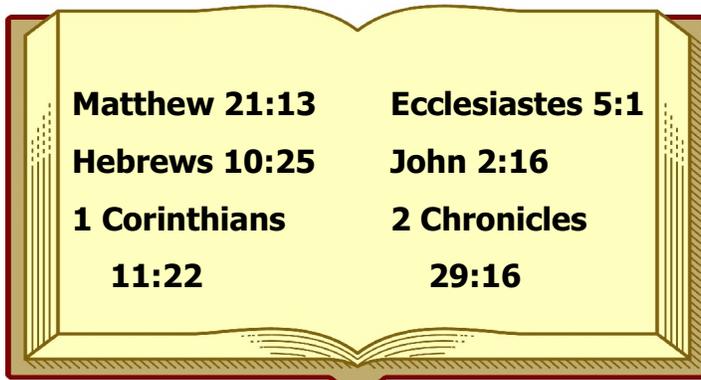
**A Place to "Hear"
(Listen)**

Scripture: _____

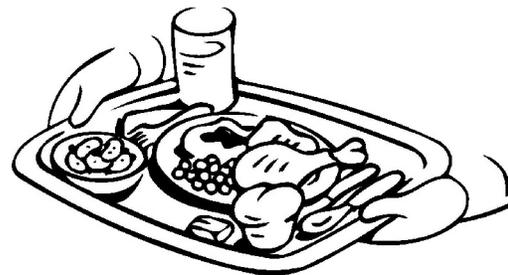


**Not a Place to
Conduct Business**

Scripture: _____



Matthew 21:13	Ecclesiastes 5:1
Hebrews 10:25	John 2:16
1 Corinthians	2 Chronicles
11:22	29:16



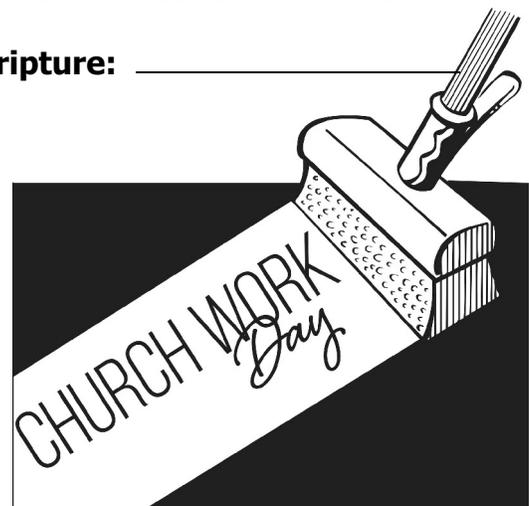
Not a Place to Eat Dinner

Scripture: _____



**The House of
Prayer**

Scripture: _____



To Be Kept Clean

Scripture: _____