

God's Temples

Ephesians 2.19-22

Key Points:

- Paul writes, '*you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.*' (v.19) This is so significant because the Gentiles were traditionally completely separate from God's people, from His blessings & covenant promises, and from His presence. We may feel like that sometimes, distant and rejected by God. But this is a lie. We are members of God's family, and as such we are fully accepted by Him.
- Paul then goes on describe God's family as His temple (v.21). The temple was a significant feature of Israel's history. God's presence was thought to be with Israel in the Ark of the Covenant which housed the stone tablets with the 10 Commandments (given by God to Moses). When the temple was built by Solomon, the Ark was placed in the Most Holy Place as a sign of God's dwelling in the temple. In 1 Kings 8, God's presence fills the temple, and Heaven meets Earth. As God's temples, God lives in us by His Spirit (v.22) and we become the place where God is present, the place of transformation, and the place where Heaven meets Earth.
- We are *becoming* God's temple (v.21). God hasn't finished with us. Individually we're not there yet - this is the process of sanctification. Corporately, God hasn't finished building the temple. That's why mission is so important - it's the family business.

Questions:

1. Where do you belong? How do you know you belong?
2. What does it mean to belong to God's family (v.19)? What are the best things about being part of God's family, and what are the hardest aspects?
3. Paul says that our cornerstone is Jesus (v.20). What does this mean? And what different might this make in your lives? (think everyday as well as big picture)
4. Read 1 Kings 8.1-11. What is the significance of Paul describing Christians as God's temple?
5. Do you have the Holy Spirit living in you? What might that look like? Are you comfortable with surrendering to God? Why/Why not?
6. One of the aspects of God's temple was the place where Heaven met Earth. Have you ever had an experience of 'Heaven meeting Earth'? (maybes a miracle, or the angelic, or a clear sense of God's presence). Should this be normal? Why might it not be?
7. God is still building His temple (v.21). What might 'Mission in the Holy Spirit' look like? Where/who might the Holy Spirit be prompting you to bless/show God's love/share the gospel with?
8. As a group, why not spend some time praying for each other to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, aligning yourselves with the identity that God has given you - that you are His family, His temples and His dwelling place?
It might be useful to read Luke 11.9-13 and maybe Acts 2.1-24 before you start, remembering that God's Spirit is a gift to us, and that He loves us so much.