

Priorities as God's People - Joshua 8

“Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal. He followed the commands that Moses the Lord’s servant had written in the Book of Instruction: “Make me an altar from stones that are uncut and have not been shaped with iron tools.” Then on the altar they presented burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. And as the Israelites watched, Joshua copied onto the stones of the altar the instructions Moses had given them.

Then all the Israelites—foreigners and native-born alike—along with the elders, officers, and judges, were divided into two groups. One group stood in front of Mount Gerizim, the other in front of Mount Ebal. Each group faced the other, and between them stood the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant. This was all done according to the commands that Moses, the servant of the Lord, had previously given for blessing the people of Israel.

Joshua then read to them all the blessings and curses Moses had written in the Book of Instruction. Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them.” (Joshua 8.30-35)



Read through the following lists, and try to prioritise them. It might be harder than you think! You can do this on your own, or talk through your choices with others.

1. You only have time to do half the things on this list. Which would you choose, and why?

- gardening, DIY, cleaning/tidying the home
- playing with the children/grandchildren
- going for a meal out or to the cinema
- visiting someone who is ill in hospital/at their home
- volunteering in a food bank or charity shop
- sharing your faith with the homeless on the street
- taking a mentally ill relative out for the day
- having a round of golf/attending a football match
- decorating a refuge in preparation for a new resident
- reading the Bible and praying for two hours

2. Rank the following in terms of what gets you closest to God (1 being the least close, and 10 being the most close)

| Rank | Activity |
|------|---|
| | Singing worship songs |
| | Listening to Christian songs |
| | Holy Communion |
| | Reading the Bible |
| | Cell Group gatherings |
| | Personal/private prayer |
| | Sharing your faith with people outside church |
| | Hearing sermons |
| | Ministry time during worship |
| | Serving God in Voluntary work |

3. Which of these things would stop you attending church on a Sunday morning?

- feeling exhausted after a very late night the day before
- having a visitor staying who does not want to go to church
- needing to prepare lunch for a large family gathering/celebration
- work brought home for the weekend, which must be done by Monday
- other members of the family who say they want to do something else
- visiting a rarely seen relative/friend which could be limited to half a day
- preparing for a business trip or holiday which begins in the afternoon
- an All Age service, or some aspect of the service known in advance
- a "once in a season" football match/cup final or business golf day
- giving a lift to the airport for a relative or friend who has asked you

4. Thinking of the Rocks and Sand idea, what 'God' things do you need to prioritise (Rock) and what other things do you need to fit around this (Sand)?