

Intimacy In God's House

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By Dave Butts

"How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near Your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they are ever praising You. Blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

"They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob. Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on Your anointed one. Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in You" – Psalm 84.

God would like for you to come over to His house. Not just for a visit...but to stay! For years I have been intrigued by how many times the Scriptures speak of God's house. It would take numerous articles such as this to discuss all the aspects of the Lord's house. But the main thing to remember about all these references is that the Bible is speaking about where God dwells; not a house made with human hands, but the place of

His presence.

I get excited by the fact that God wants me to be where He is. He wants me to live in His house; not just someday in heaven...but now! Every day! That's true for all of those who belong to God through faith in Christ Jesus.

The fact that God has opened up His home to us is a great indicator of His love for us and His desire to experience intimacy with His people. On a human level, we have a tendency to protect our homes...our living space. We may invite many people over for a meal, or a time of fellowship. It is much more a rarity that we would invite someone to come and live with us...to share our home...to join with our family.

One of the more confusing aspects of spending time with God in His house, is that He also spends time with us in *our* house. How can we be at His house and He be at our house at the same time? Our problem is our fleshly limitation to space...we think in terms of being in only one place at one time. God has no such limitations. So Jesus would say things to us like, "I will be in you and you will be in Me." Both are true...and both occur simultaneously. So, we pray like David in Psalm 27:4, "*that I may dwell in Your house all the days of my life.*" We also hold on to the words of Jesus that, "*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our home with him*" (John 14:23). We must not be in confusion about this. It is not a *place* we speak of, so much as an awareness of God's presence. When we are with Him, we are home...His house...our house...home!

Look at these passages from the New Testament that speak of the house of God:

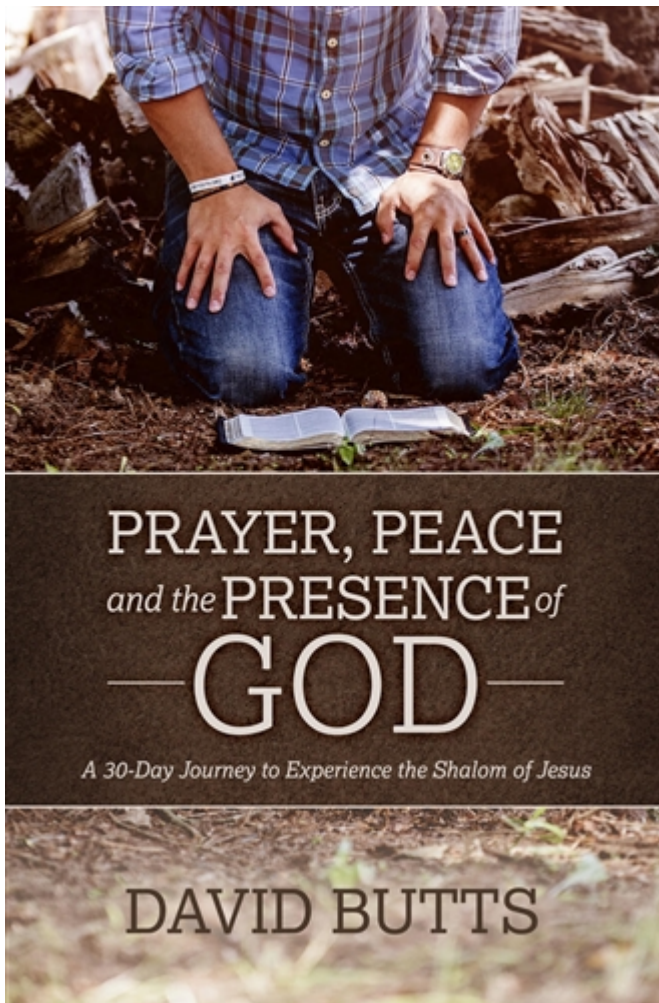
"But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are His house" (Hebrews 3:6). *"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood,*

offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

Psalm 84, quoted at the beginning of this article, is one of my favorite Old Testament passages describing the house of God. Note that the description is not focused on the physical aspects of a house...but on being in the presence of God. What strikes me most from Psalm 84 is the passionate desire of the Psalmist to be with God. *"My soul yearns...even faints...for the courts of the Lord."* He so longs to be near where God is, that he would gladly take a place of servanthood, as a doorkeeper, just to be in the vicinity. According to verse four, one of the marks of the person who has learned to dwell in the presence of God is worship and praise. How could it be otherwise? If we, like David in Psalm 27:4, are allowed to gaze upon the Lord's beauty, a life of praise will be the natural result.

There is so much more to discuss as we consider drawing near to the Lord and dwelling in His house all the days of our lives. Could I suggest that you begin this walk toward the Lord's house today by beginning to pray Psalm 27:4? Here is a sample of the way I've begun making that journey:

"Lord, there really is just one thing that I want from You today. And You, Yourself are that one thing! I want to be with You today. I want to dwell in Your house all the days of my life, gazing upon Your beauty and seeking You in Your temple. Thank You for wanting that close, intimate relationship far more than I do. That gives me great confidence in prayer right now. I know that this is a request that You are longing to answer. Thank you."



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The author, David Butts (1953-2022), started writing this book and 10 days into it he got word that he was in stage 4 with a rare form of lymphoma. God allowed him to live in a greater way for five additional years of full-strength ministry. Dave has challenged readers in *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* to seek after His best life, no matter what it holds.

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