

Where Is Your Tent of Meeting?



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by [Dave Butts](#)

At a staff gathering recently, I was asked which Bible character was a real hero to me. My immediate answer was Moses, not so much because of his amazing miracles or leadership ability, but because of his intimacy with God. Again and again in Scripture we see Moses in wonderfully intimate conversation with his God. Exodus 33:7-11 is an excellent example of why Moses is a hero of mine.

“Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp

some distance away, calling it 'the tent of meeting.' Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent."

I believe there is much in this story that can help each of us grow in our intimate relationship with God.

The Discipline of a Place

Moses had a regular place where he met with God. He took the time and effort to pitch a tent, which he even called "the tent of meeting," outside the camp. There are several important items in this passage that might escape our attention if we don't look carefully. Note the habit: "Moses used to" (v. 7). This was a regular discipline for Moses. He didn't have an idea to just one day pitch a tent. It was the discipline of having a place to meet with God.

I think it is also important to recognize that he had this tent erected outside the camp. It was not in the middle of the hustle and bustle of everyday life . . . but outside the camp. Walking with God in the midst of all of life is important, but to draw near in intimacy, we will all need quiet places where we can withdraw and spend uninterrupted time alone with the Lord.

The Priority of a Leader

The time that Moses spent in the tent was obvious to the people. They all knew when their leader was going to spend time consulting with God. Moses made this a priority in his life as a leader of the people of God. It would amaze many leaders today to know how much their people desire that their pastor spend much time in intimacy with the Lord. It is of great comfort to God's people to know that the priority of their leaders is to walk close to God.

The Passion for the Presence

The tent of meeting was a very visible sign to Moses of the fulfillment of God's promise that He would go with them. Moses had begged God not to send them anywhere apart from His presence. So here, in this very portable prayer room, Moses came to spend face-to-face time with God. Moses was a man with a passion for the presence of God and the visible expression of that passion was coming to this obvious place of meeting.

The Visibility of Power

You can't hide a life hidden with God. By its very nature, a life of spiritual intimacy and prayer is quiet and doesn't cry out for attention, but the transformation it brings to an individual's life begins to cry out with power. Here is an old man (Moses) trudging through the camp to a tent out beyond the others. He's just going to pray, but the times of intimate fellowship have triggered the power of God in a visible way. As Moses walks into the tent, the heavens open and a pillar of cloud descends to guard the door to the tent. No one is going to disturb this prayer time.

The people are watching. Nothing is done in secret. The power

of God has come into their midst because their leader has begun to pray. How desperate the Church is today for men and women of God who regularly come to the tent of meeting! How we long to see the pillar of God's presence descend into our camps because a godly leader has come to meet with his God!

The Response of the People

When Moses went to talk with God, the people of Israel paid attention. As he walked to the tent, all along the way the people stood, I believe, both in honor and in anticipation. Something is going to happen! Indeed, as Moses goes in the tent, the pillar of cloud descends. As the people in the camp begin to discern God's visible presence, they begin to worship outside their tents. The prayer of this man of God has prompted great worship among his people toward their God.

We are not Israel in the desert today. Moses' tent of meeting became the Tabernacle, which became the Temple, which—in awe we say it—which has become us. We are now the meeting place of God. Our very bodies have become His Temple (1 Cor. 3:16). Emmanuel, God with us, has taken up residence within us through His Spirit.

We need to be careful that this truth is present reality in our lives and not just theological belief. In many ways, we have privileges that Moses could not have imagined. He had to walk outside the camp to a tent to talk with God. We have the privilege of talking with God wherever we are. Amazing! Amazing grace of God that He has come to dwell in us!

The challenge is simple. Don't read a story like this and say, "Oh, wouldn't it have been great like Moses to meet with God in the tent of meeting?" Today, wherever you go, your tent of meeting goes with you. If we will wake up and realize the amazing gift God has given us through Jesus, we can walk in this great intimacy each day and once again, the world will

see the life of God lived out through His (new) covenant people.

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