

God has made his home with us in the person of Jesus Christ. While we were separated from God because of sin after the fall, Jesus came and dwelt among us, much like God did in the tabernacle as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus in our midst, and recognize the love and sacrifice that Jesus made to live among us, and ultimately, the sacrifice he made to dwell within us through the Spirit. Let's take some time this week to make the most of this holiday season, and invite Christ to make His home with us.

Day 1

Answer the Door

God's love is not unbelievable because it is so small, but because it is so big. The love displayed by the incarnation of Christ, by His birth thousands of years ago seems too good to be true. Just like Jesus was too good for the manger he was laid in, He also seems far too good to make His home with us. Accepting the love of God for us seems somewhat scandalous, especially if you understand God's holiness. Knowing that someone without standards loves you is not much of a compliment, but understanding that the creator of the universe, the most holy being, the person with the highest standards in the world loves you is quite the ego boost, one that can be difficult to accept. The truth is, we must accept it. I would imagine if the President of the United States, along with all of his attendants and aides, and with his press pool, stopped over at your house unexpectedly, you might not answer the door out of sheer embarrassment. That is a far-fetched scenario, but in truth Jesus stands at the door and knocks, and often our embarrassment keeps us from answering. How could Jesus love us? If you don't struggle with that, perhaps your God is not holy enough, or you have too high an opinion of your own holiness. God will enter our lives and make His home among us, and he will not leave it alone. It will change. It will start to reflect the glory of the One who lives there, but that can only happen when we first accept a love for us far more than we deserve. Don't be too shy, let Him make His home with you.

Verses: Zephaniah 3:17, Ephesians 2:4-5, 1 John 4:19

Prayer Topics: Love, Perspective, Truth

Day 2

Make Some Room

Whenever a long-term guest arrives, we have to think about making some room, and if that guest is going to make their home with you, this is especially true. You may have to clean out that spare room that becomes long term storage for things that don't have another place, you may have to clean out the garage so you have a place for the things in the guest room. When it comes to God making His home with us, making room is vital, for God has big plans for your life together. If you are like most people, and most people are, then there are some parts of your life that are off-limits to God. There are some parts of your life that you think are fine the way they are, some parts that you prefer not to be interfered with, some parts that you want to remain hidden. The problem with keeping some parts of your life off limits, and not making room for God to be in them, is that these are probably the most important parts for God to address. The part of your life that has become more important than everything else, including God, is the part you need to hand over to Him. Are there parts of your life that are exactly the same now as they were 5, 10, or 20 years ago? Is it possible you haven't made room for God to be in these parts of your life? Do you have old wounds that make you sensitive about parts of your life? Do you have old relationships, old experiences that make you reluctant to trust God about parts of your life? Make some room for God, because as he lives in a place He transforms it to glory, without fail.

Verses: Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Prayer Topics: Surrender, Humility, Transformation

Day 3

A Full House

When God moves into our lives and makes His home with us, other people get invited in, as well. You will find that God will start making your life bigger. Maybe your life was like a one-bedroom apartment, but with God, it will soon become something appropriate for others to live in as well. Maybe this doesn't sound good to you. I know a fair number of Christians who see their life as a place for God and themselves only. It is easy to come in late, sneak out early, and never let anyone else into your life. The problem is, if you let God have His way, He will make you rich with true riches. We often get very comfortable with our level of poverty in our lives. Having riches creates responsibilities, and if you are not ready for them, they seem daunting. I remember watching a documentary about a British family that owned a castle, and it illuminated all that needed to happen to keep the castle running and in good repair. This great wealth that the family had created jobs for others, saw thousands of guests come into the castle every year, and planted them within the local community, making their relational network immense. Are you ready for true riches? If God moves into your life, if He starts making it resemble His glory, you will become wealthy with new and improved relationships, and your life will be full of guests and others who make their home with you.

Verses: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Psalm 127:1, Proverbs 24:3-4

Prayer Topics: Growth, Responsibility, Work Ethic

Day 4

Does Your Home Have a Fence?

Generally, when we think of home, we think of hearth more than fence. When we read about the construction of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, it is easy to focus on the holy of holies where the glory of God dwelled among the Israelites. It is less common to consider the fence around the tabernacle, but the fence was an important element. The fence was there to separate what was Holy from what was profane. It was given to protect the holiness of all of the things in the tabernacle, as well as the holiness of God. It was also there to protect the profane things, lest they accidentally wander into the holiness of the tabernacle and die. When we think of God making His home with us, we should remember that that home has a fence. Not everything will be part of the home that God is making with you, many things will be excluded. Most of us don't like this aspect of His dwelling with us, but it is vital. Do you like bugs in your bed? Do you like rain on your head? Do you like birds in your bread? Walls are just another type of fence, and walls protect us from all the things that would make our lives much more difficult and poorer. Do you want to be free from the difficulties and problems of your life, the ones that aren't redeemed to your glory? Then allow God to put up the appropriate fences and walls in your life. It will keep out the vermin, and it will keep you warm and dry.

Verses: Exodus 25:8-9, Hebrews 8:5, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Prayer Topics: Boundaries, Protection, Glory

Day 5

Does Your Home Have a Hearth?

The hearth is the place in your home where everyone gathers. It is the place where deep conversation happens, unity is formed, and people are warmed and cheered. It is the center of the house, and no house is complete without a hearth. Does your home have a hearth? In scripture, the hearth was the place where the sacrifices took place, the incense was burned, and God's presence was manifested. When the tabernacle was dedicated, God's glory came out of the Holy of Holies and lit the fire on the brazen altar. The fire from the brazen altar was then used to light the altar of incense in the holy place, connecting all three areas of the tabernacle. On the sabbath, it was not lawful for Israelites to stoke the fire in their own hearths, but the "hearth" of the tabernacle would be stoked as more sacrifices were made on that day. The lesson for the Israelites is that the true center of their lives was not their physical family's hearth, but God's hearth. Their heavenly father was more important than their earthly father. During this time of Christmas, we focus a lot on our families, and that is just and good. But during this time, we should remember that if we fail to make God the center of our lives, our families will suffer. His hearth is more important than ours, so we should spend some time making sure His fire is burning bright in our lives, creating the center point for others to gather around and find warmth and light.

Verses: Isaiah 28:16, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Colossians 3:12-13, Proverbs 4:23

Prayer Topics: Warmth, Comfort, Home