

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prepare a Place Wk 3 – Preparing Places for His Presence

09.13.26 - Kyle Morris

About this series:

As we conclude *Prepare a Place*, we are looking toward the future and asking not only what places God may be inviting us to prepare, but what kind of people He is preparing us to become. From Eden to the Tabernacle, from Jesus to the indwelling Spirit, Scripture tells the story of a God who desires to dwell with His people. God's presence is not simply something we hope to experience someday. His presence is the purpose of life right now. As God transforms us into people who carry His presence, He sends us to prepare places where others can encounter Him.

Goals of This Week's Discussion:

- See God's presence with His people as a major theme running throughout Scripture.
- Recognize that God's presence is more valuable than His provision, blessings, or the places He gives us.
- Understand that through the Holy Spirit, believers have become a dwelling place for the presence of God.
- Consider where the Spirit wants to bring healing, freedom, restoration, and transformation within us.
- Identify ways we can carry God's presence into our homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, relationships, and city.

Connections with the 7-Marks of a Jesus Follower:

- **Walk in the Word** - Scripture reveals a God who continually prepares places to dwell with His people, from Eden to the New Jerusalem.
- **Keep in Step** - We learn to recognize the Spirit's presence, listen for His voice, surrender to His work, and follow His leading.
- **Share Your Story** - As God transforms us, our lives become stories of what His presence and power can restore.
- **Play Your Part** - We carry God's presence into the places He has positioned us and help prepare places where others can encounter Him.

Starter Questions:

- When have you experienced God's presence in a particularly meaningful or memorable way?
- What tends to help you become more aware of God's presence in your everyday life?
- Why can it sometimes be easier to seek what God can give us rather than simply seek God Himself?

The Throughline of Scripture

The sermon traced a theme throughout the Bible: God continually prepares places where His presence can dwell with His people. Eden begins as a prepared garden where humanity lives with God. The Tabernacle and Temple become places for His presence among Israel. Jesus comes and "dwells" among us. Through the Holy Spirit, God then makes His people His dwelling place. Finally, Revelation ends with God dwelling fully with humanity in the New Jerusalem.

- What changes about your understanding of the Bible when you see God's presence with His people as a theme connecting the entire story?
- What do Eden, the Tabernacle, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the New Jerusalem reveal about God's desire to be with His people?
- Why is it significant that the prepared place eventually moves from a physical location to a people filled with the Holy Spirit?

Read Exodus 33:1-3, 14-16

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.' 2 I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."

14 And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

Discussion:

- What was God still promising Israel even when He said His presence would not go with them?
- Why was Moses unwilling to accept the promised land without God's presence?
- The sermon summarized Moses' response as, "If you aren't going, we aren't going." What would it look like to live with that same conviction?
- Where are we tempted to value God's provision, comfort, security, success, or blessing more than God Himself?
- The sermon asked, "Do you seek God's face as much as you seek God's hand?" How would you answer that question in this season of your life?
- What would change if God's presence truly became more valuable to us than anything He could give us?

The Presence Is the Point

The sermon reminded us that we can prepare all the places, but without the presence of God they are simply spaces, real estate, landscaping, and square footage. The goal is not simply to create better environments. We want to become people filled with God's presence so the places we enter become places where others can encounter Him.

- How can churches or individuals unintentionally become more focused on what they are building or accomplishing than on the presence of God?
- What does it look like practically to prioritize God's presence rather than simply talk about it?
- Where might God be inviting you to slow down, listen, or make more room for Him?
- How could greater awareness of God's presence change the way you enter your home, workplace, classroom, neighborhood, or relationships?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.

Discussion:

- What does it mean to think of yourself as a place where the presence of God dwells?
- The sermon compared tending our inner lives to Adam and Eve tending the garden and the priests tending the Tabernacle and Temple. What might it mean for you to “tend” the place where God’s presence dwells?
- Are there habits, priorities, wounds, relationships, attitudes, or areas of sin that the Spirit may be asking you to surrender to Him?

Reviving People:

We have watched God bring new life to a shopping center through Revive Church and The Bridge. But the sermon asked an important question: What if what God has done with this place is a picture of what He wants to do in us?

God takes what is broken and restores it. He takes what is empty and fills it with His presence. He enters places that have been neglected, wounded, hardened, or surrendered to something other than Him and begins making them new.

- Where have you already seen the Holy Spirit bring meaningful transformation in your life?
- What area of your life would you most like to see God revive in this season?
- The sermon imagined people who have known us for years noticing a difference in our patience, generosity, forgiveness, speech, and love. What change would you hope others increasingly see in you?
- How could transformation within us become a way for others to encounter Jesus through us?

Reflection:

- Is God’s presence infinitely more valuable to you than anything else in your life?
- Are you currently seeking God Himself, or mostly seeking something from Him?
- Where might the Holy Spirit be wanting to do a deeper work of healing, freedom, surrender, or transformation within you?
- Where has God positioned you to carry His presence right where you are

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Application:

- **Seek His presence.** Set aside intentional time this week simply to be with God without beginning with a list of things you need from Him.
- **Ask the deeper question.** Pray, “Holy Spirit, what do You want to do in me?” Pay attention to what He brings to mind.
- **Tend the temple.** Identify one area of your inner life that needs attention and take a practical step toward surrender, healing, freedom, or obedience.
- **Carry His presence.** Choose one place where you live, work, study, or play and intentionally enter it aware that God’s Spirit is present in you.
- **Prepare a place.** Think about someone God has placed around you and create an opportunity for them to experience His love, hospitality, prayer, encouragement, or presence through you.

Pray:

- Thank God that His desire throughout Scripture has been to dwell with His people.
- Ask God to make His presence more valuable to us than His provision, comfort, success, or blessing.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal places within us that need healing, freedom, surrender, restoration, or transformation.
- Pray that Revive would become a people who refuse to move forward without God’s presence.
- Pray that we would carry His presence into our homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and relationships.