

TOGETHER AS THE TEMPLE

By Ben Stokes

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 3:16

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple, and that God’s spirit dwells in you?”

OBSERVATION

What a rich question that is posed for us in this verse. *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple...”* The answer to this question will reveal a truth that we as God’s people must hold onto tightly. In first Corinthians chapter three, we see other images describing the church. The church is revealed as God’s field, a building, and here as God’s temple.

The temple served many purposes in the Old Testament, but one of its primary functions was as a place for the revelation of God. Of course, we know that God’s presence is not restricted to a temple made with hands, but wherever His people meet, there He reveals Himself. In our focus text— *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple, that God’s spirit dwells in you?”* — that *“you”* is not singular, it is plural. The picture here is that not only are our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit and God’s Spirit dwells in each of us, but when we come together corporately, we are the dwelling place of God’s Spirit. This is an awesome insight!

Just think about what this means when we come together on Sundays and gather in our Life Groups. All these spirit-filled children of God come together and BOOM! God’s glory resides in their midst and instantly the living God is with you. God is among you; His glory resides in the gathering of His people. This reality should change everything about how we approach gathering as believers. When we come together as God’s church, as His temple, we do so with a sense of awe and with a sense of anticipation. This is why when we gather, we put so much emphasis on making sure His word is clear, and when we pray, we know we are not just saying words, because we are having an encounter with Creator of all things. Do not see Life Groups or church as simply going through motions. It is actually a setting where we worship God. When we open God’s Word and somebody teaches it, we’re hearing from God. This is what it means to experience the revelation of

God through communion with God in the temple. The temple is not the building, it's the people!

OBEDIENCE

Having an understanding that when we gather together as God's people, God is in our midst, you should be moved to:

- Meditate on the fact that God literally lives in you. Take some time and think through all of the amazing implications of this reality. As you do this it will transform the way you look at yourself and church.
- View God's temple with respect. When you come together with your Life Group, make it a priority that everything you do is done so for the glory of the God that is present among you. This reality should inform how we treat His Word in our gatherings and as we pray corporately.
- Take time to consider specific ways you reveal God's revelation to others when you gather in your Life Group. Is your Life Group a place that you invite others to come and experience the presence of the living God?

PRAYER

God, help us to have a high view of Your church as Your temple. God, I pray that we would be aware of Your presence in our midst, aware that You are with us. When we gather in our Life Groups and on Sundays, may we do so with an understanding that You are with us, speaking to us and communing with us. I also ask, God, that when people come into our gatherings, they would know You are among us and they would fall on their faces and worship. May we be a clear aroma of Your presence in our gathering as Your temple. Amen.