

1 | COMING HOME TO THE FATHER



God wants to be with people. God wants to be involved in your life and for you to be involved in God's plans. More than that, you read in the Bible over and over again that God wants to have meal with people, this is a place of intimacy in the Bible.

Old Testament

In the Old Testament we read God's heart's desire; to be with His people. God wants to make a covenant. God chooses to be connected with people who love Him. In this covenant-making there are commands and rules to which His promises are tied.

(Exodus 24:9-11)

New Testament

In the New Testament, the pattern begins the same: Jesus shares His heart at meals. Jesus explains: disciples are people who follow Jesus, want to become like Him and do what He teaches them out of love for their Master.

The disciples get to hear more of Jesus' experiences than many others because they do with their whole hearts what Jesus has preached and instructed.

Jesus calls the disciples friends. Friendship, that means love, trust and devotion to one another.

(John 13:1,2 John 14:15-17,23)

In the Old Testament, the people follow rules; in the New Testament, disciples follow the person Jesus, whom they love. As a result, the Father and Jesus come to these people and live with them. The rules they could follow are different: they could love as Jesus loved.

"Discipleship is following the love that Jesus shows."

Jesus Is paving the way to the Father

There is another difference between the Old and New covenants God had with His people.

In the Old Testament, a ritual was required to get near the Holy God. Only priests were allowed in the holiest part of the tabernacle and only the high priest very occasionally in the most holy part.

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus gives His life and dies as a sacrificial lamb. The curtain in the temple tears open. This is perhaps the most important thing that happened in history: Jesus opened the way to the Father.

(Hebrews 10:19-22)

Ekklesia is a homecoming

The Ekklesia is a group of believers, sometimes two or three, sometimes hundreds, who come together to meet God. A powerful Bible story about coming home is 'the parable of the prodigal son'. Both sons lived in their father's house. Neither really knew their father. The youngest son does not feel loved enough to stay with the father. He leaves, squanders his inheritance, ends up in the gutter and returns home.

The eldest son does not realize the access he has to his father on a daily basis. The lesson Jesus wants to teach: to be at home with the Father, to be loved, to be valued in His presence for who you are. You are His heir. You don't have to do anything for it, it is you.

EXERCISE:

Have you really come home to God the Father? Describe the time or period when this happened. Describe where this was, what persons, if any, were involved.

Are you more like the oldest or youngest son? Or are you already sitting at His 'table' regularly?

What steps do you want to take to come home to the Father's love and appreciation?

If you did come home to the Father, how can you help others do the same?

Is your church or community a place where your eyes are opened to the life God's Spirit wants to give you? What does that look like?



LESSON LEARNED:

It's hard to give something if you haven't received it yourself. People come home to God through you if you have come home to God.

