



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

GOD'S EXIT PLAN • ENTERING GOD'S PRESENCE • EXODUS 40:1-38 • 5/25/2025

MAIN POINT

We prepare ourselves to walk in the presence of God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever gotten to meet a celebrity? If so, who? Was this a chance encounter or did you try to meet him or her? Share with the group.

How do people normally act around their favorite stars?

People often act unusual in the presence of their heroes. At rock concerts, people scream when their favorite band takes the stage. If a person meets one of his or her favorite movie stars, he or she is often too afraid to even ask for an autograph. Being in the presence of someone we admire can really shake us up. While our reactions to celebrities are often a little immature and perhaps a little shallow, the point that the presence of highly esteemed people has an effect on us should not be overlooked. Israel had the opportunity to physically see the presence of God as a pillar of fire and as a cloud of smoke. Yet, there were conditions that Israel had to meet for God's presence to be revealed in the Tent of Meeting. Today, we will look at how important it is to prepare ourselves to be in God's presence, and the effect that God's presence should have on us.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 40:1-11.

What jobs did God give Moses and the other priests to prepare the Tent of Meeting? What was the significance of these tasks?

What relationship exists between the time we take to prepare for an event and the importance of the event itself? What do you spend the most time preparing for in your life? How much time do you give to your faith?

We often think of the priest's job as making intercession between people and God. The priests offered the sacrifices to God, and they also taught the people what was required of them by God. Just as important, however, is the fact that they had to prepare the people to meet with God. The priests were responsible for the upkeep of the tabernacle. They alone were allowed to carry the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Covenant. They got everything ready for God to dwell with His people.

How important is it to model obedience before other, particularly younger, Christians?

God gave them specific instructions so that everything would be made ready for Him to dwell with His people. The priests had to take this job seriously, and they had to keep God's Word exactly. When they did, this also taught the people how important it is to obey the Lord explicitly and to treat Him with reverence.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 40:16-33.

Why did Moses meticulously record their obedience to all that God had told them to do with the Tent of Meeting? What would have happened if they didn't obey completely?

How does Moses' strict adherence to the Lord's commands serve as a model of obedience for us today?

Are there any areas where you are tempted to do "just enough" but not all that God has asked you? Why do we bargain with God in this way?

What do we miss if we don't follow His instructions?

Moses wanted the people to know, and the Lord wanted us to know, that every detail in God's instruction is to be followed. To Moses and the rest of the priests' credit, they obeyed the Lord in all that they did. If they chose not to obey, they may have been severely punished by the Lord. When Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu failed to obey completely, God struck them down before the altar (Leviticus 10:1-3). The priests had to

take great care how they presented themselves before the Lord. The preparations they made, like setting up the Tent of Meeting and washing their feet, reminded them to treat the Lord as holy. It should have also reminded them that not only should they prepare themselves outwardly for the encounter, they ought to also make certain that their hearts were right before they came into the Lord's presence. The heart is what matters to God. When we approach Him, we don't have to physically prepare ourselves; we constantly prepare our hearts as we walk with Him daily.

Since we are in the presence of God all the time through our great High Priest, Jesus, how should we prepare to walk with Him every day?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 40:34-38.

**Why doesn't the Lord's presence physically appear now as in Moses' day?
What has changed?**

How can the preparation of the tabernacle help us prepare for God's presence today?

Was there ever a time in your life that you just felt like you were wandering without a sense of purpose or direction?

Though we do not have to prepare as Moses and the priests did, we ought to still prepare ourselves each day to walk with the Lord. If our body is the Lord's Temple, we ought to confess our sins each day and humble ourselves before the Lord. We ought to read God's Word and be prepared to follow Him.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What spiritual disciplines help you see what it means to walk with God and meet in His presence?

How is God present in a meeting like this group gathering? Why should we see His presence?

Read Acts 1:8. How does God's presence empower us for mission? Why don't we rely on this presence as much or as often as we should?

PRAYER

Ask the Father to help us remember that we always walk in His presence by the Holy Spirit. Pray that our actions will not grieve the Holy Spirit, but that we will humble ourselves and seek to glorify Him in all that we do. Thank the Father for sending Jesus to cleanse us from our sins, that we might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

COMMENTARY

| EXODUS 40:1-38

40:2. The first day of the first month, in other words New Year's day, was appropriate for inaugurating use of the new structure. Since the Israelites had left Egypt at the middle of the first month of the year (12:1-11), the tabernacle was to be erected two weeks before the first anniversary of their exodus, at the start of the month that marked the beginning of their second year of freedom (40:17), and nine months after their arrival at Mount Sinai (19:1).

40:12-15. A full description of installing Aaron and his sons as priests appears in Leviticus 8-9.

40:17. The first month of the second year refers to the start of the Israelites' second year after they had left Egypt.

40:34-35. This visible display, in the form of a cloud, showed that the Lord was consecrating the tabernacle by His presence, as He had promised (25:8; 29:44-46). What He had described to Moses before the Israelites made the golden calf was taking place on the basis of the Lord's character and Moses' intercession. The Lord was revealing Himself to His redeemed people at this meeting place (1Ki 8:10-11,56-60; 9:3; Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36; Jn 1:14,18; 2Co 3:18; 4:6; Eph 1:17-18; Rev 21:3).

40:36-38. Exodus ends with a summary of what was ahead. The Lord guided the Israelites on their journey by means of the movement of the cloud, as He had done before their sin with the golden calf. Now the cloud that the Israelites had seen above Mount Sinai was associated with the tabernacle, a portable dwelling place for the Lord. He would dwell among His covenant people on their way to the land that He had promised them.