



ENCOUNTER
SUNDAY NIGHTS 6PM

Christianity &

HUMAN

WHOLENESS



Exploring the questions of Life

**WEEK 2: HOW IS MY BODY
“A TEMPLE OF THE LORD”?**

WEEK 2: HOW IS MY BODY “A TEMPLE OF THE LORD”?

BIBLE READINGS:

I Cor 3:16-17 / I Cor 6: 18-20 / Ephesians 2:19-22 / I Peter 2:5

In the above passages the readers are invited to think of themselves as God's dwelling place. The Corinthians would have been familiar with temples dedicated to different gods, and would have understood the required care and protection of the holiness of temple sites as reverence to the deity who resided there. So what Paul was saying to them and is saying to us is; as the One dwelling in you is holy, then you, the temple, must be holy. If you are God's temple then proper temple honouring must require that your “self” must be treated with honour.

Temple – Greek word “naos” specifically denotes the temple building itself (as opposed to the whole complex) and often denotes only the inner, most sacred part of the building. This word has been translated in various places to mean: the Holy of Holies, temple of God in heaven, or bodies of believers. Do you get a sense of the sacred, God space it indicates?

Temple – 3 courts. Holy of Holies – High Priest would go in once a year through thick curtains to make sacrifices for the sins of the people. In the 3 hours of darkness while Christ was on the cross this physical curtain was torn. Christ's death has given us access into the Holy of Holies that we may approach God directly. When Paul talks of our bodies, he is using the word which better describes our whole self and not just our bodies (self = body, mind, spirit) as this Holy of Holies. That is quite a powerful image – that me – myself, is home to the Holy Spirit, and that is the case only because of the death of Christ.

Human life is the result of the will and work of a generous and loving creator. God's creation of an individual human being affirms God's loving care of every person. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (*Psalms 139:13-18 NIV*)

Temple buildings require respect, maintenance and care. Someone needs to make sure the structure stays sound, that cracks are filled up, paint is redone, the area is kept clean and that things that are required by the worshipers are present and available. So too, our temples – ourselves - require care and maintenance.

If any part of our self is neglected it affects the other parts. If I neglect my body, my mind and my spirit become affected. If I neglect myself, it affects the bigger temple which is my community.

- **Body** – eating well and exercising. If we eat fast food all the time and don't exercise we are likely to become obese and get ill. When we are ill it is difficult for us to be a place of sacred encounter. I am responsible for taking general care of my body (cleanliness, diet and exercise) but also to do myself no harm.
- **Mind** – this is intellect and emotion. Am I filling my mind with the things that matter? What am I exposing my mind to by what I watch (TV, movies, internet) and by what I read? Hebrew saying – *that to which the eye hooks, multiplies*. Have you ever had a goal / wanted something really badly? Somehow everything else

becomes of lesser importance as you strive towards or obsess over that goal. What we spend our mental energy on...counts.

- Our **emotional** state is also important. If I am depressed or angry or anxious, I am also unable to function properly. Consider who you turn to for emotional support and ask yourself what the quality of that support is like and whether that brings you closer to wholeness or further away from it? If my buddy who I turn to, regularly feeds me tubs of ice cream, or bottles of alcohol to forget my woes, how is this helping? Find someone or somewhere to get help.
- **Spirit** – how goes it with your soul? Are you working flat out but not taking enough time to be fed yourself. A cup cannot overflow to others if it is empty. What does your spirit-time look like? Is it all intellectual Bible study – and that's not a bad thing – but are there spaces for fellowship and others where you are quiet enough for God to speak?

Even Jesus took time to focus on the care of these elements.

- **Body:** He went up into the mountains, away from the crowds to rest; many scriptures tell of meals he shared with others. When he entered Jericho, he called Zaccheus down from the tree saying he would dine with him that night.
- **Mind:** As a 12 year old boy we find him left behind in Jerusalem because he was debating the scriptures with the elders. He went to synagogue on the Sabbath
- **Emotion:** He asked his friends to go with him to pray on the night of his betrayal.
- **Spirit:** He went aside to pray.

I'm wondering what the bigger picture of your life looks like? If I go out and party all Sat night, what is the quality of my worship on a Sunday? Also, if I am running myself flat out doing stuff for a ministry or the church and then arrive exhausted to worship every Sun – can I be fully present and participate?

If I starve myself, or spend 5 hours a day in the gym – how does that affect my emotional and mental well-being?

Am I part of the bigger temple – the community? How do I contribute the mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of my community?

How I can be a place where others can know the sacredness of this ground and experience an encounter with God?

Many of you will be saying – I have nothing to offer. I am not good enough! I really like a term that was used to describe whether a product was good enough. That term is “fit for purpose”. A 7 series BMW is a really nice car. But it is not fit for purpose to carry rubble. The good old bakkie would be perfect / fit for purpose in that scenario. But the bakkie would not be fit for purpose to carry a bride to the church or her wedding day – in most instances anyway!

David Benner in *'The Gift of Being Yourself'* tells us that God meets us in our individuality, because God wants to fulfil that individuality. God wants us to follow and serve in and through that individuality.

There are many examples of this – of people who could easily have given up and said they have nothing to offer but found they could be fit for purpose. The question becomes – what is my purpose? What is my unique way of my self being a temple of God? And what is my role in the bigger temple of community?

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN WHOLENESS

10 July “How is my body ‘a temple of the Lord?’”
(Sam Bennett)

17 July “What about Suicide & Depression?”
(Similo Sanqela)

24 July “What are your addictions?”
(Pete Grassow)

31 July “How can I be free?”
(Similo Sanqela)

7 Aug “Do you need Healing?”
(Pete Grassow)

BMC YOUNG ADULTS

ENCOUNTER (Sunday Nights)

Contact Stanford January on 011 463-2333

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