

As for Me and My House – Building a Home of Faith

Joshua 24:1,2a,14-18

What does it mean to build a home that lives and shares faith in Christ? In this service we will look at four “keys” for a Christ-centred home life that come from the Scriptures.

Moving house is a big effort. Lots of choices.

Where to live?

Which schools?

What people will you try to connect with?

What will you do the same and what differently?

Joshua and the people of Israel – setting up life in a new land.

Many challenges, possible directions and choices.

People in new land lived differently and had different beliefs.

“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.” (Joshua 24:14-15)

Joshua – “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”.

What does it mean to build a home that serves the Lord?

In building a home, first of all need a foundation.

For Israelites, the foundation was faith in God who had rescued them from Egypt.

Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we travelled. And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God.” (Joshua 24:16-18)

Our foundation is faith not just in God of the exodus, but God of the cross and the empty tomb. Faith in Christ is our foundation.

To have a house need more than a foundation – need to build on it.

Question is how do we build on that foundation that is Christ?

How can we bring that faith into our home lives so that it shapes, feeds and sustains us?

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God did not just leave the Israelites to work it out for themselves – gave them some wonderful wisdom.

Go back to Deuteronomy 11 -

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. ... Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

In these words and the wider book of Deuteronomy God's people are given 4 cornerposts for building homes of faith:

- Receiving the Word of God
- Having "faith talk" in the home.
- Sharing in faith rituals and traditions
- Serving others.

Cornerpost #1: Receiving the Word of God

'... Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds ...'

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Word of God is to our spiritual lives what food, clothing and shelter are to our physical lives.

Making time and space to listen to God's Word and allow it to strengthen, guide and shape you.

- Making weekly worship attendance a priority.
- Having regular home devotions.
- Reading Bible stories.
- Learning Bible verses.
- Listening to Christian music.

Cornerpost #2: "Faith Talk" in the Home

'Teach these words of mine to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'

God's desire is that our faith is not just a set of beliefs to nod yes to on Sundays but something living and active that is discussed and shared in daily life.

- Sharing "highs" and "lows" each day and praying about them.
- Sharing your daily "God-sightings".

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- Sharing about what your faith in Christ means to you.
- Talking together about God's Word applies to issues that arise in your lives.
- Looking for the many "unscripted" opportunities that arise.

Cornerpost #3: Faith Rituals and Traditions

'... tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ... Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.'

Symbols, rituals and traditions give shape and order to our lives - they give us patterns to live by and remind us of what is most important.

Many Christian adults remember special Christmas or Lent rituals or traditions that helped to shape their faith as children

– the challenge for today's Christian home is to revive, rediscover and reinvent rituals and traditions that will do the same for their children.

- Mealtime prayers.
- Blessing one another.
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- Observing the church year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost.
- Giving a faith "twist" to birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, start and end of the school year.
- Celebrating baptismal birthdays.

Cornerpost #4: Serving Others

'I command you to be open-handed toward those of your people who are poor and needy in your land.' - Deuteronomy 15:11

Power of service is that it gives practical expression and content to our faith.

Have a servant God who calls us out to serve others – and in doing so we meet him right there.

A serving home is a home that is growing together in Christ.

Challenge is to not just do occasional acts of service but to nurture a culture of service in our homes.

- Doing chores in the name of Christ.
- Volunteering together in church and/or community.
- Donating to charity.
- Doing deeds of kindness for neighbours.

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Share on this topic with a degree of trepidation, for I know that I certainly do not have it all together.

My home life is much more like a rundown house than a mansion.

Good news is that at very heart of our faith is God's unconditional acceptance of failing believers.

Being Christian is not about having it all together; it is about being together with Christ, who displays his power through our weakness! As often as we fail, Jesus invites us to turn to him and begin again.

God loves home renovations!

He meets us right where we are, and helps us to begin again.

Keeps on working to renovate us as often as we need it.

“Journey of a thousand miles begin with one small step”

One thing you could start doing, stop doing, do differently?

As people of faith, we never walk alone.