

Church - The Temple of God



IN - helping a sense of belonging...

Opening Question:

Have you ever seen / visited a temple or impressive cathedral? What did the building tell you about the beliefs and values of those who built and worshipped there?

UP - hearing from God and growing...

Biblical background - When we read the word 'temple' in the New Testament it would have provoked a whole range of meaning stretching back hundreds of years. The Jewish Temple at its core represented God dwelling with his people. Take some time to read these passages about the original temple (maybe in smaller groups!):

2 Chr 3:1-17; 2 Chr 6:18-20; 2 Chr 7:1-4; 2 Chr 7:11-22

What do these passages say about the temple?

What was its appearance?

What was its purpose?

What was God's response?

READ: 1 Peter 2:4-6

In the New Testament the church is now called the temple, but not a static physical structure but a LIVING COMMUNITY.

The old temple was characterised by these elements, which now apply to the living community of the Church:

1. Sacrifice as Worship

2. Beauty in Appearance

3. God's Presence in the Midst

4. Space for others who were yet to believe (Isaiah 56:1-8)

QUESTION for discussion and prayer - how do these 4 elements challenge you? What do they mean for us as this church and LIFEgroup?

OUT - impacting others...

The Church as the Temple of God is living, is being built up, others are being drawn and added. Pray for our church and LIFEgroup, for the physical, relational and spiritual space for those who God would build into this community. Pray for people who are on your heart to be built into God's living temple, his Church.

BIBLE READING:

1 Peter 2:4-6 (GNT)

4 Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. 5 Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For the scripture says,

“I chose a valuable stone, which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion; and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed.”