

**LIFEGROUP STUDY  
WITH: East of Eden  
2021-11-14**

**PARTICIPANT NOTES**

**OVERVIEW**

Welcome back to our LifeGroup study – WITH. The Tabernacle and Temple were designed to point back to the garden of Eden and to create a space where God’s presence could dwell among his people even in a fallen world. They are both a reminder of God’s holiness and of his desire to dwell among his people. The goal of today’s study is that we would grow a better awareness of just how central the Temple was in the minds of the biblical authors and the people they were writing for.

**ICEBREAKER** A Sacred Place

Have you ever experienced a sacred place, a moment where you found yourself saying – “Wow, I’m in a sacred place.”? This summer our family toured the oldest church in Canada. It is found in Quebec City. Although I believe God is everywhere, there was something special about being in that place where all the visitors seemed to have a “holy hush” as they looked around. Perhaps for you that “sacred place” was the top of a mountain, or when your child was born. **Share your “sacred place” experience with your group.**

**FROM THE SERMON**

On Sunday, Pete talked about the Tabernacle and the Temple in the Old Testament. What was a highlight or key insight for you from Pete’s sermon?

**STUDY**

For our study we’ll explore the accounts of the Tabernacle and the three Temples in the OT. These structures were designed to remind the people of God’s holiness, presence and desire to dwell WITH them.

**THE TABERNACLE**

From the very beginning of creation, God’s plan was to be WITH his people and they WITH Him. When Adam and Eve sinned, this interrupted the fellowship we had with a holy God. (Gen. 3). The Tabernacle was a temporary means by which the people could once again fellowship with God without being destroyed by His holiness.

READ Exodus 25:8 – The Purpose of the Tabernacle

- **Why was the Tabernacle necessary at this point in history?**
- **What does the Tabernacle teach us about our relationship with God today?**

READ Exodus 40:34-35 - God's Holiness and our Sin

- **Why was Moses not able to enter the Tabernacle when God's glory filled it?**
- **How is this significant to our understanding that sin separates us from a holy God?**

### **THE FIRST TEMPLE: Solomon's Temple**

Solomon's Temple was the permanent structure built in Jerusalem by King Solomon to replace the portable Tabernacle. The Temple was the centre of worship and animal sacrifice for the entire nation of Israel. Three times a year, all Jewish men were required to travel to Jerusalem for a religious festival. This first Temple was destroyed by Babylon (586 BC) when the Israelites were exiled as punishment by God for their sin.

READ: Habakkuk 2:20

"The LORD is in his holy Temple. Let all the earth be silent before him."

- **What does this verse tell us about the significance of the Temple?**

### **THE SECOND TEMPLE: Zerubbabel's Temple**

When Persia conquered Babylon, the king of Persia immediately allowed the Israelite exiles to return to their homeland to rebuild the Temple. This Temple, though not as large or impressive as the first, established a place to remind the Israelites of God's presence. This first group was led by Zerubbabel who had charge of rebuilding the Temple. As a conquered people, the Israelites no longer had a king or an army. As a result, the priesthood replaced the king as the centre of authority in Israel.

READ: Ezra 1:1-5

- **What do you notice about God's role in the rebuilding of the Temple?**

READ: Ezra 6:14

- After significant opposition, the Israelites persevered and the Temple was completed. **What does this account tell you about God's desire to be WITH His people?**

### **THE THIRD TEMPLE: Herod's Temple**

Herod attempted to pacify his Jewish subjects by building a bigger and better Temple for them. This is the Temple to which Jesus was brought after his birth and where his parents "found" him sitting with the teachers when he was 12. This was also the Temple where Jesus taught and drove out the money changers. Herod's Temple was destroyed by Rome in A.D. 70, after which the Jews could no longer offer animal sacrifices.

- **What do you think it would have been like for the Jews to see Herod's Temple?**

The purpose of this study has been to heighten our awareness of the significance of the Tabernacle/Temple system – to see how these structures were designed to draw people into God's presence and to remind us of His holiness and our sin.

- **How has this study helped you see God's desire to be WITH His people.**

### **EXPERIENCING GOD:**

Psalm 84 may very well have been sung by the Israelites as they made their pilgrimage to the Temple, the holy place in Jerusalem. As a LifeGroup, or on your own, read through this Psalm 3 times. Notice the ways God's dwelling place, the Temple, is described. Feel the emotions in this Psalm, the longing the Psalmist expresses to be with God (vs. 2).

As you read and meditate on this Psalm, allow God to use this experience to bring you into His presence. Take time to worship Him and enjoy being with Him.

### **PRAYER**

This week let's focus in on our Creekside Youth Ministry. Brennan and Emily will be leading, a series all about "BIG QUESTIONS". As a LifeGroup, or on your own, let's pray that our students would grapple with questions of faith that they have and that our Youth Pastors and group leaders would handle the questions well. Our Youth Ministry is also in need of 2 more female leaders and 2 more male leaders to join the team. Please pray that God places this need on the hearts of those who are considering serving, and that He brings the right people to lead our youth to the team.