

Do You Dwell in a Spiritual Home—Or Are You Still Stuck in a Grimy Hotel?

One of the most important decisions a believer makes in their life is where they are going to live. This is not in reference to a country, state or even a city. This is in reference to the many commandments in the Scriptures telling the Israelites that when they would arrive in the place G-D was bringing them, they were to dwell there. One example of this type of commandment is found in Deuteronomy 26:1:

“And it must be, when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, and you possess it, and dwell in it.”

As a believer in Yeshua as the Messiah, we all have a calling in our lives. Part of that calling is that G-D will bring us to the place that He wants us to serve. It may be a small congregation in the rural community or a large mega congregation in an urban environment. Either way, it is He who directs our paths to bring us to where we as individuals will serve.

But the location of our dwelling is not the most important concept being brought out in these Scriptures. The real point is not where we will dwell. Rather, *will* we dwell, and if so, *how* will we dwell.

In the United States, we largely have three choices of dwelling places. We have hotels, rental units and homes. Each of these types of residence accomplishes the same basic functions. They provide a level of protection from the outside world. However, each one requires a different level of “dwelling” or “ownership” from us.

Hotels: We rent them for a short time. We know when we are arriving, and we know exactly when we are leaving. We have almost no responsibility to them. We don't decorate them, we don't personalize them in any way, and the truth is we treat them in ways we would not ever think about treating the home we grew up in. We walk in, toss our suitcase on the bed, take a bath, and throw the towels on the floor and leave them. We throw trash in the direction of the trash bin, not caring if it goes in or not because someone else is responsible for cleaning. Hotels are only temporary, and we live in them, but we do not dwell in them.

Rental Units: As with hotels, when we rent a home we know when we begin our time there, and we know exactly when the lease is up. We do have a greater level of responsibility to the home, and unlike we do with the hotel, we can't just throw garbage on the floor, expecting others to clean up after us. We have to clean up ourselves. We can make some personalization to the home. Maybe we can paint the rooms. We can choose our own furniture and decorations. Rentals include limited responsibility, but they also have a landlord that is ultimately responsible for repairs and damage. A rental has more investment, yet it still is not a full commitment, and we always know in the back of our mind that we are not staying there, as it is only temporary. Rentals are only temporary, and we live in them, but we do not dwell in them.

Homes: While outwardly similar to hotels and rentals as far as providing basic security and comfort, they are completely different in that the homeowner has assumed complete responsibility for the home. With a home, you not only get to decorate, but you can remodel, you can move walls, change flooring, change lighting fixtures, add additions and pretty much anything else you choose to do because you own the place. If something breaks, it is up to you to fix it. If something gets dirty, it is up to you to clean it. You have no start and finish date and no lease. Homes are a full commitment. You

both live in a home and you dwell in a home.

When G-D instructed the children of Israel to both possess the land and to dwell in it, they understood the difference because they had just spent 40 years living in tents, moving from place to place. G-D was providing a clear distinction to them of this change that He was requiring of them. Don't just live in the land I am giving you – possess it and dwell there.

For those of us today, these words are just as significant. We are all called somewhere, wherever that is, and to dwell there. The problem is that while most of us listen to the calling of the L-RD and we move to the place He to which He has led us, we spiritually don't move into homes—we move into hotels or apartments.

Some attend a congregation as if it was a hotel. They give only as much as required to live there for a short while. They arrive when they want, throw their stuff on the floor, make a mess with no intention of staying longer than check out time, knowing full well that they expect someone else to clean up their mess once they leave.

Others attend a congregation like an apartment. They pay what is required to live there. They expect to be there more than a few days or weeks. They may even paint and decorate, and they are responsible to clean up after themselves and perform minimal maintenance. But the entire time, they are looking into the distance for the time to arrive when they leave. They may even appear to others as if they are dwelling, but they are still only living in their rental.

But the commandment was not just to live in a temporary dwelling, but to possess and dwell. In order for us to be what we are supposed to be, both in our home congregation and in the greater Kingdom of G-D, we must go all the way and decide we are going to buy the home and dwell in it. We must make our dwelling our own, be responsible for our messes, and make

repairs and improvements as needed. We must make the full investment with no escape plan or time limit.

It is only when we make that full investment that we also open ourselves up for the full benefit of ownership. Part of that benefit is belonging to something greater than ourselves.
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