

SHELTER-BUILDING

Don't wait for a rainy day – build, nurture and maintain your 'shelter relationships' – starting today.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Shelter is a basic need for every human being, whether for everyday living or in emergencies.
- ❖ But our nature is not simply physical – it is also spiritual. And spiritual 'shelter' is even more of a necessity. The question right now is this: *where is your spiritual shelter?*
- ❖ Spiritual shelters don't come with street addresses and postal codes. They come with names. They are individuals we can run to in times of need.
- ❖ Psalm 46 speaks of the most significant shelter, the one we should seek before all else: God, who is our refuge and strength!
- ❖ Some may say, "What do you mean? 'God'? I don't know Him. I can't see Him/call Him/touch Him. We have no relationship. If He really cares, why would He allow *this* to happen to me?"
- ❖ At times, even God-fearing people have asked these questions. You may be in that place right now.
- ❖ Here's a reality: if we want to know God and have a vibrant, sustaining 'shelter relationship' with Him, it will demand an investment of our time – just as we invested time in finding a place to live.
- ❖ Many years ago, someone coined this phrase: "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." Here is one of God's mysteries: He has a way of showing Himself to us in the skin of human beings -- people He works through to come alongside us in times of need.
- ❖ Another reality: as good and godly as a person may be, they may think two, three or even four times before extending themselves to strangers, because of all the inherent risks. We don't usually invite strangers into our homes to live with us.
- ❖ The wise man says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17).
- ❖ So what are we to do?
- ❖ We must begin building 'shelter relationships' with others – now! Don't wait until you're in need to reach out. Build your shelter before the storm comes!
- ❖ If we come running to God when things are bad but have a very shallow relationship with Him, we cannot have full confidence in our prayers.
- ❖ The same is true when we run to part-time acquaintances for help in times of great need. We cannot expect them just to "be there for us".
- ❖ They may be concerned, but other people or issues in their lives may have greater priority. We really haven't built the kind of relationship that would demand their full attention.

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 46; Proverbs 17:17, 18:24; Amos 3:3

- ❖ Solomon gives good advice in Prov. 18:24. All translations agree on the last phrase, "... there is a friend...closer than a brother."
- ❖ However the first part of the verse is debated. A few say, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly", while the majority of translations read, "A man of too many friends comes to ruin."
- ❖ The majority view warns us that having an abundance of so-called friends is not beneficial. We need a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- ❖ The minority still make a very good point: we must be friendly ourselves if we want to have true friends. Here is the self-test:
- ❖ What kind of friend am I? How much time am I investing in establishing and nurturing the kinds of friendships that will sustain me in trouble?
- ❖ How would I rate my relationship with my parents? My siblings? My spouse? My children? God has placed us in families for a reason. Our family members are meant to be the first ones we turn to.
- ❖ Most importantly, am I nurturing my 'shelter relationship' with God? Have I actually met Him through His word? Do I prioritize my meeting time with Him each day?
- ❖ Can I call on Him with confidence because of our close association? Can He call on me when He needs me to serve someone else?
- ❖ Can I immediately run to Him when I need spiritual shelter? Comfort? Solace?
- ❖ Shelter has a name. His name is Jesus and He loves to show up in the form of family and friends we love and take time to build 'shelter relationships' with.
- ❖ Shelter has another name. My name. I'll be a shelter also.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Why does God use humans to be 'His hands, feet and voice' to each other?
2. What advice would you give someone who has been discouraged in their attempt to build 'shelter relationships' and is ready to give up?
3. Read Amos 3:3. What are the qualities we should look for in friends we will "agree with"?

Prayer Time




Share requests and pray for one another.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms)  (New idea)  (Think about)

 (Do this)  (Speaks to my heart)  (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

*Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline*

Start-up: When you go on a vacation, what is your preferred lodging – cheap hotel, luxury hotel, resort, rental house, friend/family house, tent, etc?!