

## Home group questions on Exodus 24:12-27:21 (focusing on 25:1-22)

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### **Sermon summary**

In the sermon, we saw how the tabernacle was a step along the way in God's plan to reverse the fall and dwell among his people again, giving rest in his presence. The tabernacle was symbolic of God's new creation. At the heart of it, the Most Holy Place was an earthly representation of God's heavenly throne room, where Israel's king would rule them by his word, from a throne of grace, above the atonement cover of the ark.

God was bound to his people, like a husband to his wife, by his covenant, with the ten commandments as its basis. These commandments were kept inside the ark on tablets of stone, as a testimony to God and the people of their covenant responsibilities and privileges. But just as the atonement cover symbolically covered over the law, so God dwelt among his people in a spirit of mercy and grace, willing to cover over their disobedience when they broke the covenant. He did this when they made the required sacrifices in faith. These sacrifices pointed forward to the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, in whom the curtain of the Most Holy Place would be torn down, removing the final barrier between God's people and God's presence.

The ark of the covenant is a sign to us that God always has and always will dwell among his people on a throne of grace, so we should be greatly encouraged! Sometimes we need to spend less time looking at ourselves and more time reflecting on these realities in order to enjoy the intimacy that we already have with God by the Spirit.

### **Questions**

- 1) Sometimes we feel like God is distant from us and we lack a sense of his presence and intimacy. Can you remember some of the different reasons why?
- 2) Often, we are overwhelmed or discouraged by the apparent inadequacy of our Christian lives, so we feel like God must be disappointed and standing far off. What does the ark of the covenant (and the tabernacle as a whole if people are familiar with it) teach us about how God is present with us in those times?
- 3) How does the ark point forward to the greater reality of God's presence that we enjoy in Christ?
- 4) Can you think of some practical ways we can encourage each other to know and enjoy the reality of God's gracious presence?
- 5) The Most Holy Place was a perfect cube. We see in Revelation 21:16 that the new Jerusalem will be a perfect cube too. You might like to read Revelation 21:9-27 in full – it is similar to Exodus 25-31 in some ways! As you compare the two, what do you learn about God's presence with us in the new Jerusalem?