

Be Prepared for a SPIRITUAL Feast of Tabernacles

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Abstract: The Feast of Tabernacles will soon be here. Honestly: is your heart in it? Are you excited about it? Are you even planning to go? Will you be prepared mentally and spiritually to appear before your Maker and to worship the King? This message is about things we can do to make it a great feast for everyone, and then five reasons we go to the Feast in the first place. This could be just what you and your family need before heading for the feast.

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Greetings again, brethren. God's four Fall feasts will soon be upon us. This is Philip Shields with a timely message: Are we prepared to come before the Almighty, and our Beloved Husband and Master – Jesus the Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, for the Feast of Tabernacles? Are you spiritually and physically preparing for it and ready to have a wonderful Feast? Are you ready to come before God's commanded assembly? Please be turning to Ex 19.

I think this message topic is vitally important right now for several reasons:

* I'm sensing less excitement, even boredom, with the Feast among growing numbers of God's people in the last few years. I didn't say "all" – just "growing numbers". I know many are still very excited at Feast time, but it's just an impression I have. In these last times, it is crucial to keep the flame of our passion for God alive.

* We'll come back from the Feast far more charged up and spiritually fed, if we give more attention to preparing for it ahead of time – spiritually, physically and emotionally. If we go especially with the attitude of doing all in our strength, with God's help, to give to the Feast, to contribute something, to be part of the reason it was a great feast for everyone – it will be a great feast.

* There are scriptures which urge us to prepare ourselves before appearing before God. 2 Chron 35:6, in this case it was before the Passover, King Josiah urges the Levites to be ready for the Passover, and "prepare your brethren". I think that principle applies to any of the holyday seasons. In Matthew 15:8, Jesus warns us of people "who honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me." We need to prepare our hearts before the Feast.

Are *our* hearts in this coming Feast? Are we deeply cognizant of the fact we are coming before our Maker? Only you can really answer that. If you could use some motivating and reminding – this sermon is for you. Even if you are excited about the coming feast, I'm confident you'll find some helpful points in this message to get you even more prepared to come away with a real spiritual boost from the feast.

In any case, I know I needed to focus more on preparing for the Feast myself, and I thought I'd share with you what several of us discussed as we discussed the topic of getting ready for the Feast. It could make all the difference between just showing up – or having the best spiritual recharging we could possibly have.

Please be turning to Exodus 19. There was another time when God's people were commanded to appear before Elohim, the great Yahweh, the Eternal God. It's instructive how God told *them* to prepare – and what we can glean from that today. Remember, that was ancient Israel and we are the “Israel of God” today.

Exodus 19:3-12

³ And Moses went up to God, and the YHWH called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

⁷ So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. ⁸ Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. ⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."

So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

¹⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and **consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.** ¹¹ And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

They were reminded of several things here – and we should think of these things when we ponder about the Feast.

- First we need to be there when God says to be there. Obviously if someone is direly ill or eight months pregnant, those people may not be able to be at the Feast of Tabernacles. One big reason we all need to go to the Feast, is because God commands us to go! That's reason enough. Yes, even in the New Covenant, it's clear that the early Christians kept Pentecost, Passover and the Feast – and all the Sabbaths, both the weekly one and the annual ones.
- In Ex. 19:10, they were to be consecrated, set apart, be conscious of their status as “the people of God”, as “holy ones”. It doesn't mean they – or you and I – are perfect. Not at all. But it does mean we have God's presence in us and we are holy ones, saints, consecrated. We need to go to the Feast with that same mindset. They were, and we are, a special people to God, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (v. 6) – if God's people would obey Him and keep His covenant. We're supposed to live our lives with that awareness – of being a light of God's way. We all stumble; I most of all. But we should repent and get back in the Christian fight as soon as we can. We are not a special people if we are not participating in the covenant life with God. Even in Christ, we let Christ lead us, direct us, and live His will, His life, His mind in our lives day by day.

- They were to wash themselves and prepare to meet God in a fresh, clean state. When we prepare to come before the Almighty at His commanded assembly, we should come washed and fresh. I think that includes the meaning of being repentant, humble, and teachable, with a clean conscience before Yahweh, our Maker.

Early Feast Memories

Some of my fondest memories are tied to the Feast of Tabernacles, even as a young child. Our family – and uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents -- used to drive up to Squaw Valley, in northern CA beside Lake Tahoe and go worship the Almighty. On opening night, it was thrilling even to a teenager, to hear thousands upon thousands of God's holy ones singing praises to the Creator, all together, all as one. We had 8 days of sermons and Bible studies, lots of social activities, Family fun shows and nights, dinners out together – it was a blast. We would come back on such a high that it wasn't unusual to have sermons after the feast about how to deal of post-feast blues! Almost like post-partum depression.

The Feast is a time to worship Elohim; it has deeply spiritual meaning – yes, yes. But it's also the time for His family to come together and rejoice, celebrating the spiritual harvest. Remember the Feast was the true, genuine Harvest Thanksgiving that God instituted. It pictures the time of a plentiful physical and spiritual harvest of souls during the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth that is coming soon. It's a time for family to come together and as one we worship the head of this Family, Abba – our dear Father, and the head of the church Jesus Christ.

I'm a father and a grandfather of three most adorable children. I have to tell you—as much as I'm excited to get the whole family together at God's feasts, I'm even more excited that Abba is going to have thousands and thousands of His children coming together to worship Him. When we see our children and grandchildren having fun together, getting along, laughing, talking, playing games – and yes, talking about God and His way, talking about the sermons and studies, talking about spiritual things – we just overflow with joy. I can only imagine what Abba feels as He witnesses thousands of His children loving, talking, celebrating, praising and being one at the Feast. I'm convinced He is right there, closer than we realize. He's in us by His Spirit. The Almighty definitely sees what we see, hears what we hear and more!

Conversely, it breaks my heart if I ever see siblings or any parents and children not getting along. Whether my own – or someone else. It breaks my heart. How must Abba feel when we split up into various factions, sometimes meeting at the Feast in the same city, but not coming together to worship together?

Brethren, we must start recognizing Jesus Christ in the thousands of forms in which He appears. Jesus is not composed of just his own life. The body of Jesus is each one who has His Spirit. And so at the Feast, we must make an extra effort to be accepting of one another, to welcome one another, to love one another – whether someone sings hymns in our fellowship or at the one across the street or across the country!

Why?

So we make Abba bubble over with joy over His children.

Psalm 133:1 declares, “How good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity...”. This was one of the final “Psalms of Ascents” which the Israelites would sing as they

traveled together, coming up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. By the time they got to this one, they were just about ready to start the Feast, thousands and thousands of fellow Israelites from all over the country were coming together.... And they sang this hymn, this psalm. “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity”.

This happened beautifully once before when the House of Israel split up from the House of Judah. Now there were 2 nations. They had their own feasts and their own feast sites. Sound familiar? Well, King Hezekiah of Judah decides to invite the Israelites down to the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, in this case, in Jerusalem. Some came! The bottom line: when it was all said and done – God is so pleased as He watches brothers and sisters coming together as one family. That principle would apply to any of God’s feasts. You can read all about it in 2 Chronicles 30, and 30:27 is the key verse at the end: “God heard them from His throne in heaven”. God heard them as the priests blessed the people and God heard their prayers.

Are any of you having the sense of God hearing His people’s prayers powerfully lately – or is it just me wondering? Perhaps this is one of the reasons why. We’re not recognizing Jesus Christ in the body of Christ, among the brethren.

Jesus says the way we treat one another is the way He feels we’re treating Him, remember? As you love, and care for, visit, and provide for and welcome the least of these my brethren, you’ve done it unto me. (Matt 25).

This is a long way to make this point: I’m going to the feast this year with the mindset of doing all within my power, with God’s spirit and strength and guidance—to make God pleased with us, with me, with you at His Feast, as He’s pleased to see His children come together as one.

Beware, be careful, about not welcoming someone Christ sees as his very own brother or sister. Instead, let’s go to the feast and treat one another as if that person in front of you were Jesus Himself – because He is. He’s part of the body of Jesus the Christ. We better honor one another, respect and be kind and loving to one another – and as we say, “make God proud of His children”. OK, maybe I should say “well pleased with” His family.

I can tell you fairly confidently, that based on what is said to the Laodecians, we have a long way to go yet.

So are you preparing for the Feast? Are you thinking about bringing God joy as you and all of us celebrate as one before Him? I hope we’re all getting ready for it in various ways, rather than just let it suddenly come upon us.

So here are a few quick reminders of what we need to be preparing for, and then a reminder of the main reasons we go to the Feast in the first place.

- **Be praying for the feast now**

- Pray for **protection from Satan’s attacks** in terms of accidents, weather, health of attendees, and even protection from Satan’s moods and spirit. Think about it: the Feast pictures the time after Satan is bound. Unfortunately right now he’s still free to roam and cause us trouble. But we can pray that Father help us refuse any safe harbor for Satan’s attitudes, bitterness and any mood that can ruin God’s feast for us.
- Pray for those preparing and giving the public messages, that their messages will be spiritually meaty and will be a full spiritual feast as we dine at God’s table. Also

pray for those giving special music. They honor God on stage for 4-5 minutes, but hours and hours of practice and preparation go into those 4-5 minutes.

- Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in joy and peace and harmony. I'll speak more about this shortly. Be thanking God now ahead of time for the Feast and all it stands for.

- **Be preparing spiritually for this time**

- It may be smart to **take a day off for fasting and praying** so we may have the right mind set for the Feast. If that's not possible, find the time to repent and be close to God ahead of time.
- Determine now to have your **mind set on the spiritual things** – and make it a point to be talking about spiritual things as we get with friends and brethren, and not on the physical all the time.
- How would you answer this? **What makes for a Great Feast?** Is it having an unending list of top class restaurants, a great home or condo to stay in? Is it having lots of money in 2nd tithe? For that matter, is it just about sermons? No! What will make a great feast is an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit among the people of God and letting the body of Christ come together and reveal the full mind of Yahweh.
 - Discuss 1984 Guyana feast – One of my best feasts. The people were dirt poor. They didn't even have the money to buy lunch for themselves or their children (describe). But whenever we talked, their conversation always had a spiritual focus. There was no mall to go to, no dance halls, no great outings we could do – but it was an awesome feast because the body of Christ came together in joy and they let YHWH speak through each person.
 - Having God's Spirit flowing is the single biggest thing that will make the Millennium – the Millennium! Sure – it is a time of deserts blooming like a rose, a time of plenty and health, a time of security – but it's also a time when God's spirit will cover the earth as waters cover the seas. The Holy Spirit is what bonds us together. The Holy Spirit is what gives us peace, gives us spiritual understanding, gives us the mind of God, gives us the Love of God. For the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by His spirit.
- Have the mindset of **love for all the brethren, regardless of the church group or fellowship they attend with**. Reach out, live the life of a loving brother or sister in Christ.
- **Prepare your holyday offering**. It is not something that is to happen on the spur of the moment – but “as each man has prepared in his heart”. First we give ourselves to God, then we can give an offering properly, Paul says in 2 Cor. Once you first give to God, think about it: God then works mightily through you and your sacrifices. Pray about the offering. Budget for it, plan for it, so you can be generous with it.

- **Be preparing physically for this time too**

- If driving, be sure car is in good repair

- Double check your rooms are booked, you've stopped the mail, you've secured your home, and your flights are booked. You know the drill. But just double-check, now.
- Allow yourself time to drive there safely – without driving all night. Every year it seems we hear the tragic story of someone who is killed in a car accident to the way to, or back from, the Feast – and usually they're driving non-stop and perhaps fall asleep at the wheel. It's not worth the risk.
- Be sure you've invested some time thinking about and planning how to make it a great feast for all ages in your family group - - for the children, for the teens, for adults, for everyone.
- **Watch your health even before the feast**
 - Many get sick at the Feast towards the end. This is not a time to be a glutton or a drunkard or lacking sleep.

Now let's shift gears a bit and talk about WHY we go to the Feast of Tabernacles – so when we get there, our frame of mind is set correctly.

WHY WE GO TO THE FEAST

1) We go to the Feast because Abba commands it. Yahweh will also command it in the Millennium, so we know keeping the Feast is not done away with.

Zechariah 14:16-19

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem **to worship the King**, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

We can see God commands our participation and presence at His Feast in other passages too: Lev. 23:1, 3 says all the annual and weekly Sabbaths are His holydays and are “holy convocations” of His children coming to worship Him.

So we go to the Feast, first of all, because God tells us He wants us there, He wants us to go there. And since God's children obey Him, we go. It's that' plain and simple. We can't talk about it being inconvenient. We can't worry that we might lose our harvest. Just as we stop on the weekly Sabbath in plowing season or harvest season (Ex. 34:21), the same principle applies here. So we take time off school, off work, and we go and assemble together to worship the King.

Leviticus 23:1-2

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts *of the LORD*, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

Leviticus 23:33-36

³³ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the LORD. ³⁵ On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*. ³⁶ *For* seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

I've shown in numerous previous sermons that Paul, Peter and the apostles all kept the holydays. In fact, had they not been assembled together keeping one such holyday—the Feast of Pentecost, they would not have received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

So – be sure to be there. God orders it.

This leads us to the next point why we go – as it says in Zech 14:16-17 —“to worship the King, the Eternal of hosts, and to keep the Feast ...”

2) We go to WORSHIP Our Beloved Abba, the Almighty Elohim, the Eternal – YHWH.

We go to worship – and oh yes, while we are there, to keep the Feast. We've just read that. Who is it we are coming before to worship? That awareness needs to be front and center in our mind, in our thinking, before we even get there.

Remember the verse in Zech 14 I've already read: “...come up to the Feast to worship the king...”

When you talk about going to the Feast, or tell neighbors why you are going, one reason that should be top and center is: we're going to worship the King of the Universe – our dear Abba the Almighty Yahweh, and His Son Yeshua, Jesus the Christ.

John 4:23- God is seeking people to worship Him.

John 12:20 speaks of Greeks coming to Jerusalem to “worship at the Feast”.

Acts 8:27-29

²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and *had come to Jerusalem to worship*, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

I do recommend you check out my sermon titled “Worship God” given a couple years ago. Check it out on my website www.LightontheRock.com, as that sermon goes in depth on this point.

In **Acts 24:11**, Paul described the reason for his presence in Jerusalem, during his defense before Felix, that he was *there to worship*.

Have you and I ever used those words in talking to believers and unbelievers (Felix was an unbeliever) – “I went to the Feast, or I’m going to the Feast, to worship”? We should be.

Part of the preparing we often do is to try to do some research of places to go, tourist attractions to see, list of best restaurants, and so on.

There is one special attraction we must never miss, and we must go there every single day at the Feast: come before YHWH, the Eternal God, in heartfelt prayer and Study. And every single day have some private worship time of Almighty God. Don’t give up seeking Him in earnest study. PLAN some time for that.

I also recommend we plan a whole day to devote to worshiping our dear Abba, our Father in heaven. If you have small children, perhaps you can do this:

- * offer to take other’s kids 1 day so that their parents can devote some hours to prayer, study, or maybe even some extra sleep.

- * they then take your kids the next day, while you do the same.

We did this for years and years, and it makes quite a difference on how profitable the Feast appears to us spiritually when we do this.

3) God commands us to rejoice and celebrate before Him at the Feast.

Leviticus 23:39-43

³⁹ 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a Sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a Sabbath-rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; **and you shall rejoice before the LORD** your God for seven days. ⁴¹ You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall **celebrate** it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

Greet people with gusto and joy. Sing like you mean it! Make at least “a joyful noise” if nothing else, as we celebrate the Feast to Almighty! I’ll bet my Kenyan brothers and sisters would put us white folks to shame – if you could hear them sing and celebrate their joy before their maker!

By the way, very important, I feel led to mention: if any of you would like to help with the expenses of the Feasts in Kenya this year, I’d be most thankful. They have a couple hundred people who are new in the truth about the Holydays and they are trying their best – but truly have little money for anything, even as they tithe, there’s so little. I thank any of you who would like to contribute for them to have a nice feast too. I can’t do it all myself, and there just simply aren’t

enough local funds to do it properly. Please join with me in helping them. Thank you, and God bless you for it.

As we rejoice, we are not going to overdo it to the point where we get sick, though! The “Feast of Booths” should not ever become the “feast of booze”. It’s not a time to be up until 1-2 am and then too tired to get anything out of the sermons. It’s not a time to be so loud in our partying and rejoicing that we keep others awake and cause a single complaint. We are to be a light to all around – so we watch our examples, the amount we’re drinking, how loud we are, how polite we are, how patient we are.

If we aren’t spiritually and physically prepared, it would be easy to let setbacks and hassles keep us from rejoicing. I think being able to rejoice is a mind-set that we set ourselves for. We see the purpose of the feast. We are thinking about it, expecting to have a good and joyous feast. We go with a determination to let nothing remove our joy at the Feast. We are planning to sing with joy and gusto. We are already putting our minds and hearts to a mind-set of looking forward to seeing old friends and making new ones. We’re praying now that Satan’s hand is stayed, kept away from causing the kinds of trouble he would love to cause – disunity, arguments, bad feelings, accidents, hurricanes threatening at the Feast.

In 1966 or so, there was a hurricane that threatened our people at Jekyll Island on the east coast – but we all prayed for God’s protection. That hurricane turned course 3x and lashed Cuba three times instead of heading up the coast. Our Creator commands the winds and the waves – as He did when they awoke him during a storm, while he was sleeping in a boat.

This is a family event. If at all possible, children should also be at the Feast. We need to prepare to make it fun for them too. We take along special toys, we plan special alone time with them. It’s not to be just an endless round of adults talking – and the kids get neglected.

I’m looking forward to building sand castles on the beach with my three grandchildren. And playing catch, or playing in the surf, or just being with them. There’s nothing like being a granddad. I’m “Poppie” to them.

Deuteronomy 12:12-14

¹² And **you shall rejoice** before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. ¹³ Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; ¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

Deuteronomy 14:26-27

⁶ And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, **and you shall rejoice, you and your household.** ²⁷ You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15

¹³ "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. ¹⁴ And **you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter**, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

I recommend we make it our intention even before we leave, that this feast we are going to focus on the spiritual.

Be sure to note, by the way, that the Feast site is in a place the LORD chooses.

4) We go to the Feast to learn to FEAR God – with a deep devoted respect for Him and His ways.

Deut 10:12-14

¹² "And now, Israel, *what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD* your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Deut 14:23-24 (this passage is specifically about the Feast).

³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, *that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always*.

Brethren, when we fully love God and know He loves us – perfect love casts out fear—but we certainly ALWAYS should fear to knowingly or callously disobey. I preach to myself first and foremost. We are all probably much too cavalier about sin. We need to fear to disobey God and REPENT deeply as we come to see how far we have fallen short, so often.

Ps 86:10-11

¹⁰ For You are great, and do wondrous things;
You alone are God.

¹¹ Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.

We learn to have a high regard for, and to guard, the name of Yahweh, and His Son. We would never use it lightly, or in cursing people or situations. We hold Him in high regard, and protect and guard His name as something most Holy.

This next passage puts a lot of this all together.

DEUT 31:10-13

And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every seven years*, at the appointed time in the year of release (when debts were pardoned), **at the Feast of Tabernacles,** ¹¹ **when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD** your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and **that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,** ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

BE A LIGHT TO THE COMMUNITY

Brethren, please remember to be a light - again.

- let's be patient at the restaurants – and tip generously. Those waiters and waitresses don't make much without the tips.
- Let's be sure to tip the lady who makes up our room each day.
- Watch our noise levels in the hotels and condos. Watch the children don't get too rowdy.
- Smile and help everyone you can in the community you're visiting.

Let them feel that they have experienced Jesus Himself in their midst, while we are there.

5) Let's make the Feast a time of actually living "the heart of a servant"

There are many needs at the feast. If we go without a heart of a servant, we will be missing much of the point of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Millennium will be a time when God's children will be ruling the earth. But how will they – will we – be ruling? As a servant, with a servant's heart, not as unconverted rulers do – lording it over others.

We are not to be like unconverted rulers who "lord it over" people and demand to be exalted and treated specially. No, we are to be like a slave for the others – but doing so from the heart.

You can decide to go as a servant in an organized way – or in a personal way, or even both. But remember to keep it in balance. Give, serve – but not to the point where you don't serve your own spouse and children as well. Don't serve to the point where you're too busy for time with your Maker.

Organized serving: volunteer to be an usher, offer to help set up chairs, offer to help with the people organizing the social events being planned, Information Booth, First Aid, choir, special music, accompaniment, PA system setup, flowers and decorations, stage setup, special meals, etc.

Personal serving: You're not on any particular lists, but a thousand things you can do to serve in a "behind the scenes" way. Here are a few quick examples to prime the pump:

- help people – especially older people – with their luggage, and carrying bags to their room
- organize something for the kids and teens – something I tried to do many years. Bowling outings, ice skating, roller skating, swim parties. Others have done wine & cheese parties. Or get-togethers for the singles. Or a special activity or dinner for the over 70 honored seniors we have in our midst.
- See a new Mom with a crying baby – in a restaurant? (Our story when we had Rachel... and someone offered to help. What a joy that someone stepped up).

But again, don't get so busy serving the Lord that you don't have time to focus on the Lord!

Brethren, I think there's a lot more that can be said, but the main focus of this sermon is just to get us all really pondering and preparing for the Feast now.

Let's go to the Feast – and let's make God have tears of joy as He watches from Heaven and sees His children loving one another – yes, even those from other fellowships. Let's make Him be so well pleased with us, as He sees His firstborn living in each of us. If we go prepared to worship, prepared to focus on the spiritual, prepared to be a giver, prepared to be a peacemaker, prepared to seek God's heart on all things we say and do – this will indeed be a wondrous feast.

One last thought about having a wonderful feast:

- **I'd recommend a GREAT WAY to prepare for the Feast would be to do your own meditation, Bible study on this topic**, and then have a discussion with you family: why are we going to the feast, what do we hope to accomplish, what do we need to do now so it goes smoothly, what spiritual focus should we have... etc. Do your own Bible study on it right away – and you'll be so much more prepared than you will be just by listening to this sermon. But it's a good start.

God be with you. Pray for me and my family too. I'd love to hear from some of you. Have a great feast... and be watching the website for more timely sermons. P. Shields