

THE HOME AND CHURCH

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

Numbers 2:2

This Old Testament passage gives us insight about the place of the two most important institutions for our lives, THE HOME AND THE CHURCH. We see this typified in the positioning of the tribes or families of Israel around the tabernacle. Every man was to pitch by “his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house.” Every family had its own standard, or flag, and its own ensign, or insignia, to identify them from the other families.

Family identity is important. In our nation, we have lost much of this. A few generations ago, it was common for extended families to grow up on the same piece of property that their parents and grandparents once farmed and lived on. Often, more than one generation lived in the same house. Our society has become much more mobile with occupations and other interests moving families far away from their relatives. In the Old Testament, they were to pitch their tent under the family banner. The families camped with their family, but they also pitched “about the tabernacle of the congregation.”

The place of worship was central to their lives. Each family was positioned around the tabernacle as the Lord directed them. Each tribe had their assigned place around the house of God. When the tabernacle moved, they moved. They kept their family

identity and maintained their nearness to the place of worship. I believe this typifies to us the importance of these two institutions in our lives. Our lives, in essence, should include a close relationship with our family while maintaining a close relationship and participation with our church family.

This picture not only reveals how important these two relationships are, but it also reminds us of the importance of keeping a wholesome balance between the two. It is easy for us to over-emphasize one and neglect the other. There are those who are so zealous about the church and its work that they fail to give the home the attention it deserves. Then there are others who, for the love of the family, neglect the place and ministry of the church God placed them in. This example teaches us to keep THE HOME AND THE CHURCH in their proper places.