

Moving Forward in Covenant

Exodus 24:1-11

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In Ex. 24, Moses instructs the people so that they can enter formally into the covenant initiated by God. One real temptation for God's people is to treat this *casually*. Here, we learn how God's people do not form a casual community, God's people form a covenant community. The gathering of the church community is very important in the eyes of God, and there is real danger that we drift away from community.

3 essential things for Agape in moving forward as a covenant community

1) Leadership: From Routine to Calling

v1 – God begins by calling not just Moses and Aaron, but also the others leaders to worship Him. He recognises them as the representatives of God's people.

Leaders belonging to a covenant community recognise that they have been called by God to shepherd His people. They go beyond the presence or absence of a routine. Their trust is in how great God is. In a casual community, people ignore their leaders. In a covenant community, people honour their leaders.

2) Fellowship: From Distance to Intimacy

Sinful men cannot casually draw closer to a holy God. The confirmation of the covenant allows His people, formerly distant from Him, to have an intimate fellowship with Him and with one another.

v9-11 – The leaders saw a limited yet beautiful view of God. They beheld Him, and ate and drank. This symbolises a friendship between God and His people.

In a casual community, people naturally drift away because they think horizontally—*“why should I still have fellowship with you?”*—when physical and emotional connection weakens. In a covenant community, people think vertically—*“God's covenant with us is the basis of moving into fellowship with one another.”* The covenant of God with us is the super glue that binds

all of our hearts in fellowship with one another. As the meal that was shared between His people was of profound significance, we learn that sharing a meal is God's way of representing and deepening intimate fellowship. A covenant community deepens their fellowship over meals.

3) Worship: From Self-wrought to Blood-bought

True worship is the treasuring of God's worth above all things. If we ever lose our sense of worship and worship other things, our covenant community will disintegrate.

In a casual community, people drift towards valuing and finding worth in other things above God. In a covenant community, people value God and worship Him through the way they live their lives.

v3, 7 – Moses emphasises that the worship of God is based on God's revelation of Himself—this is done as he reads God's Word twice. The people's immediate response of obedience was one that is merely external. It drifts as we see later on in their worship of the golden calf (Ex. 32). This warns us not to be presumptuous. However, we can be hopeful. It is not our worship of God that ensures we are in covenant with Him; it is our covenant with God that ensures our true worship of Him.

v4, 6, 8 – The covenant is not ultimately sealed with the verbal promises of the people, but with sacrificial blood. Even then, the covenant they had received will not bring them to a place of true worship; they need a better covenant (Heb. 9:18-20). Jesus Christ is the sacrificial Lamb whose blood seals our new and better covenant with God (Heb. 9:26, Mk. 14:24). As God's covenant community, we now rely on the perfect obedience of Jesus in our worship of Him.

Have you found yourself drifting in any of these areas? Return to Christ, the anchor for

our leadership, fellowship and worship. This is how He is leading us forward and how we can move forward as a covenant community.