

EXODUS 27 - GOD'S THIRD PLACE

Sermon Outline Handout

Kevin McGill

God designed the courtyard as His “third place”—a shared space where His people could draw near to Him together. Worship is not a transaction but a relationship cultivated with joy, gratitude, and community.

I. The Altar: Relational Center (Exodus 27:1–9)

Every relationship circles something. Israel's gathered around the altar. Each sacrifice spoke to God:

- Burnt Offering (Lev. 1; Num. 28:3–4): Total commitment — like renewing vows.
- Grain Offering (Lev. 2): Gratitude — thank-you gifts for God's provision.
- Peace/Fellowship Offering (Lev. 3): Communion — a shared meal with God.
- Sin Offering (Lev. 4; 16): Reconciliation — for unintentional wrongs.
- Guilt Offering (Lev. 5): Restitution — repairing trust after intentional sins.
- Drink Offering (Num. 15:1–10): Joyful pouring out — worship as celebration.

Key Contrast: Israel often treated sacrifice as transaction (Mic. 6:6–8). But God wanted cultivation, like tending a garden—care, attention, joy (Jn. 15:4–5).

II. Faith is Communal (Exodus 27:9–19)

- Faith is personal but never private (N.T. Wright), It is deeply personal but not individualistic (Tim Keller).
- “Do not neglect meeting together” (Heb. 10:25).
- Picture two neighbors offering guilt sacrifices—side by side, confessing. That's community.

Why community?

1. Shared humanity: Others get our struggles, doubts, and joys (Rom. 12:15).
2. Strength: Being around others who take God seriously sustains us.
3. Space: Discipleship always makes room—“Walk with me as I follow Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).

III. Oil for the Lamp: A Communal Project (Exodus 27:20–21)

- The presence of God is a community project
- Priests tended the flame, but the people supplied the oil.
 - Lamp = God's presence (Ex. 25:31–40).
 - When the lamp went out (1 Sam. 3:3), it signified the people stopped gathering.
- Jesus affirmed: “Where two or three are gathered, there am I” (Mt. 18:20).
 - The church = God's gathered people (ecclesia). Together we are the light of Christ (Mt. 5:14–16).
 - Example: At our Back-to-School event, families found joy and peace through our volunteers' hospitality. God's presence showed up through smiles, conversations, and kindness.