

Faith under construction

Parashat Terumah ([Shemot/Exodus 25:1-27:19](#))

If you have spent any time in a large fellowship or congregation, surely you have been a part of a building project or have been asked to contribute a donation to such a project. Whether locating a facility for the first time, renovating an existing building, expanding, or setting out to build a brand new sanctuary, building projects can feel overwhelming. There is fundraising to do and often many of the congregation members will kindly volunteer time and labor to help.

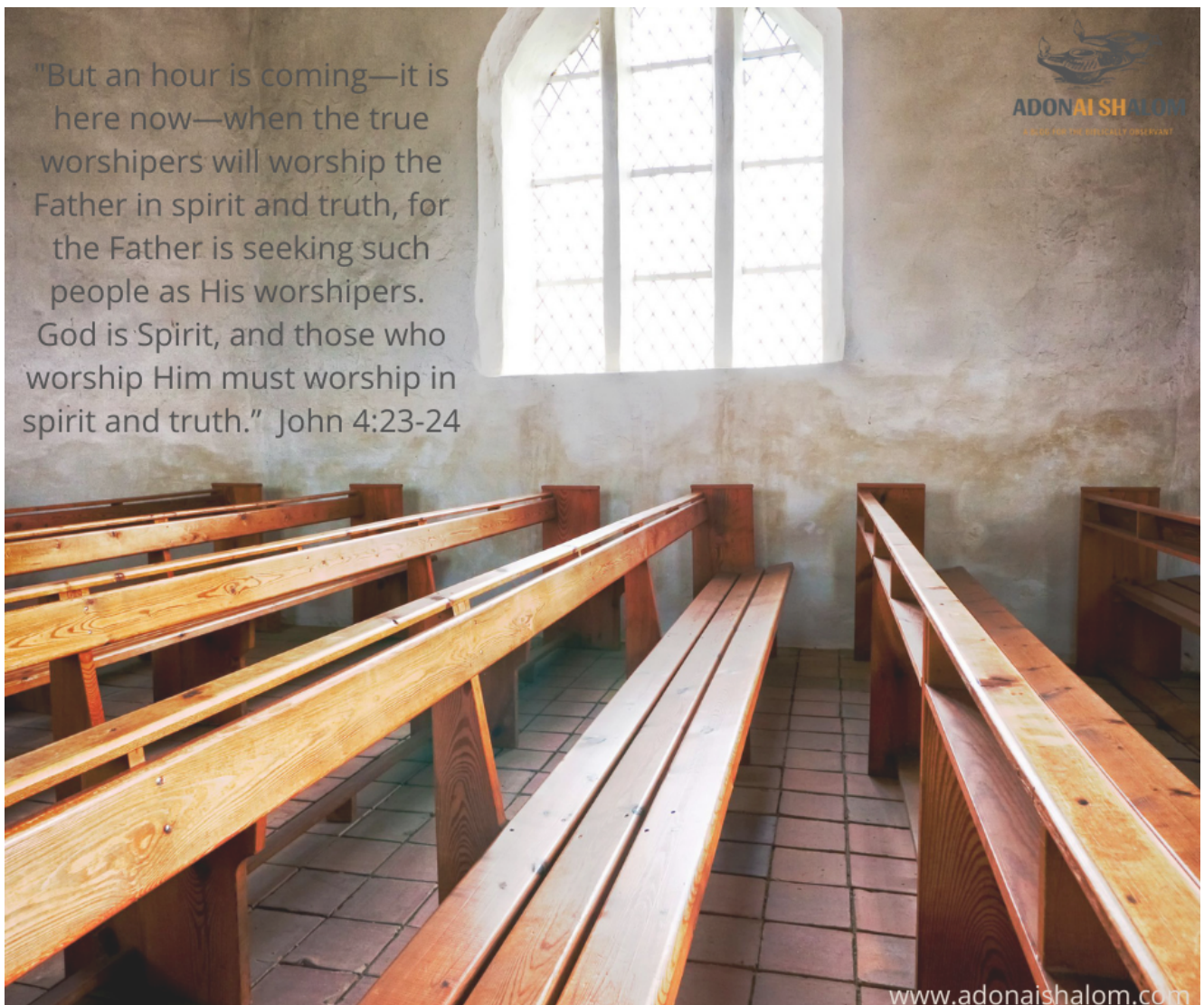
Buildings and Renovations

Building is a natural outworking of our faith. As a community of believers grows, there needs to be a gathering place for worship. The point of the gathering space is to worship, yet so many congregations focus more on physical comforts than on a space that will truly function as a Biblical worship center.

My husband and I visited a church for several months when we were recently married. We were struck by the intensive efforts the church's leadership was going through to push forth a building campaign agenda. It was clear that the pastor *wanted* a new space. But we wondered if the congregation truly *needed* a new space. Was the church growing? It appeared to be. Were there enough parking spaces? Always. The new building didn't seem to be an immediate need, but we appreciated the fact that the church had *plans* to grow and to witness in their community. What felt unsettling were the enormous posters containing illustrations of the proposed sanctuary, auditorium-like with movie theatre type chairs and all the opulence of a modern American megachurch.

Humility vs. Comfort

You know what church buildings are my absolute favorite? The small ones. The humble ones. The ones where you can tell the people *came together* and worked to create a space for worship. The village churches in parts of Mexico that we have visited where all they have are some wooden benches and a pulpit. The people gather because they love the LORD. And He meets them where they are.



Even here in the U.S., a lot of thought used to go into the worship space from the perspective of how it would facilitate the worshipper to concentrate on the LORD. I grew up in a church that had Congregationalist roots. The design of the sanctuary is one of the best I have ever seen, and I don't just say that because I grew up there. It is very simple, and

the choir was placed in the back of the church. This was done so that the choir was considered part of the congregation and their voices would be heard easily by all. The idea was that regular church members would be inspired to participate in the congregational singing.

Today, most every church arranges for their music team to stand in front on a platform singing at everyone, very much like a concert. The music is so loud that nothing is missed if folks don't feel like singing along. I am not against having some leadership up in front, but careful consideration about the design of our services and gathering places is warranted. Building campaigns can be a good thing if our focus remains on pleasing the LORD and our spaces have room for genuine, pure, Biblical worship & song, freedom in the Spirit, and Biblical dance.

What is most important in any building is the collective effort put forth in its construction.

Not everyone is a skilled contractor, but everyone can contribute in some way *beyond* just financially.

Building the Mishkan (Tabernacle)

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To build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) we find an interesting Hebrew construction (pun intended!): *v'yiqchu li terumah*. What does this mean for us?

וְיִקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה

Parashat Terumah
Shemot/Exodus 25:1-27:19
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In *Parashat Terumah*, Shemot/[Exodus 25:1-27:19](#), we can see that building design and collective involvement is important to YHVH. He gave extremely specific instructions about how to build the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle).

In [Exodus 25:2](#), there is an unusual Hebrew construction (pardon the pun): ***v'yiqchu li terumah***. “Take for Me an offering/a portion/a donation.” The phrase in Hebrew: וְיִקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה. The full verse reads: [“Tell B’nei-Yisrael to take up an offering for Me. From anyone whose heart compels him you are to take My offering.”](#)

What is unusual about *v'yiqchu li terumah* is that it doesn't say, “Have the children of Israel give to Me.” It seems to suggest more of a compulsion – they are **to** give! They are to give of themselves – and their hearts ought compel them! If a

member of the community will volunteer of their time and talent, they are to do so wholeheartedly!

Furthermore, “for” is a word inserted for us as English speakers. The Most High says, “Take Me.” Take Him into your heart; your body His temple. The tabernacle was designed as a meeting place and He wants an appointment with you, Child of the Most High. **“Mishkan” literally means “Adonai will dwell within.”** God is asking for a donation – He wants you.

Will you allow the Eternal One to dwell within you?

Will you allow Him to build up your faith and construct in you something beautiful of His own design and perfect plan? Will you focus on what really matters instead of the external accoutrements that tempt us to start church shopping? Will you put on the garments of praise, seek Him in His holy place with all your heart and allow Him to adorn you with the beauty of holiness?

Each of us is a work under construction. The Great Architect has a blueprint, that if you’re willing to follow, you will stand tall as His magnificent work of art. Remember, every building needs a strong cornerstone, and Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) is our Chief Cornerstone:

[“You have been built on the foundation made up of the emissaries and prophets, with Messiah Yeshua Himself being the cornerstone. In Him the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple for the Lord. In Him, you also are being built together into God’s dwelling place in the Ruach.” Ephesians 2:20-22.](#)

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EPHESIANS 2:20-22



Ephesians 2:20-22

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