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HAVING A MEETING WITH GOD

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Are you one of those people that can't get anything done unless it's in your day planner or on a calendar? I've never been great when it comes to organization (as anyone who knows me well would say), but I've known several people that live by their recorded plans. A brother in Christ once related the anger and surprise that his wife felt when she saw that a planned lunch with her had been written into his planner. She didn't like it at the time ("You have to schedule time with your wife!?!?"), but later understood that by writing her in, her husband was making their lunch a priority.

Whether you are more like that brother or more like me, it's fairly safe to say that these three things are true of you: you do plan things, your life revolves to some degree around your planning, and your planning reflects your priorities. In our time impoverished society, any number of people or things are vying to make it into our literal (or mental) day planners: work, school, the media, family, and friends to name a few. With so many distractions, it is very easy to miss a very important appointment – the one we should make each day with God.

Under the Law of Moses, God had a specific place where he met the children of Israel and the priests offering sacrifices on their behalf each day. It was called the tabernacle of the congregation (tent of meeting in most translations), and it was where God promised "I will meet you, to speak there unto thee" (Exodus 29:42). God does not operate out of a physical location today; His tabernacle is the body of individuals that make up the church of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17). Yet, one can see the value in having both a specific place and a specific time to meet and talk with God.

What if we could apply the concept of the tent of meeting in principle? God does still speak to us – He does so through His word, the Bible (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 12:25; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 1:3). We still speak to Him – through prayer (1 Peter 3:12). What if in our literal day planners (or our mental ones) we could say, at this time and at this place each day I am going to have a meeting with God?

Our figurative "tent of meeting" should be a quiet, comfortable place free from distractions. It can be anywhere: a quiet study room, a bed before going to sleep or after getting up, a car during a

lunch break at work or prior to clocking in, or even a back corner at the local McDonalds. It should be understood that unless there is an emergency, this time is taken and off limits for anyone but God. It should be a one-on-One meeting, separate and apart from family devotionals or meetings of the church.

One of the devil's most powerful tactics is to squeeze God out of our lives by occupying our time with things other than prayer and Bible study (Luke 8:14). When we fail to pray, we fail to receive God's blessings and increase the burden we must bear personally. James said that we often don't have because we fail to ask, and Peter reminded us of the need to cast our burdens on God (James 4:1-2; 1 Peter 5:7). When we fail to read the Bible, we let slip God's great salvation for us and keep ourselves from life's only sure guidebook (Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Peter 1:3).

Have you had your meeting with God today?