

July 19, 2015

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SOJOURNER?

Pat Cowden

Sarah, Dale, and I had the opportunity to go down to Anchor Point a work at the KNLS radio station last week. The work was hard but we felt like we really accomplished some things that needed to be done. What was outstanding about that part of the trip was the group of people who had assembled to work there for two weeks. They are a part of a group of Christians called the Sojourners. These people, mostly retired, have RV's or trailers that they live in either part or full time. Congregations, children's homes, Christian schools can request help from the Sojourners by tuning in an application summarizing the need. When a project is approved to bid on the individuals or couples can put their names on a list to go and provide labor for whichever project that interests them.

This particular "sojourn" as they call it included eight couples from several states in the lower 48. One couple had one of their grandsons, Zach (about 12), who traveled with them and lead a prayer for us during a morning devotional. The team consisted of a lot of Christians with varied backgrounds and expertise all of whom wanted to contribute as much as they could to get the work done.

When I was driving back to Anchorage I started thinking about the work we had done and told myself when I got back I was going to study the word sojourn as it is used in the Scripture. Here is what I found:

- Sojourn, sojourner, or sojourning, is used 13 times in the NKJV,
- There are two verbs: {paroikeo} and {edpidemo} which basically mean "to dwell beside, among or by"
- There are three adjectives: {paroikos}- sojourner, {apodemos}- gone abroad or sojourning in another country, and {parepidemos}- sojourning in a strange place, a pilgrim
- There is one noun: {paroikia}- a sojourning, dwelling as strangers

Peter uses the noun form in 1 Peter 1:17 in reference to our lives on earth. "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves **throughout the time of your stay here** in fear." In other

words, our time on earth is a time when we should consider ourselves dwelling as strangers. It would be weird if we did feel "at home" on Earth because our citizenship is truly in heaven (Philippians 3:20). There should always be a sense of being away from our rightful place. That does not mean God does not want us to enjoy the wonderful creation He has provided. It also does not mean we should not enjoy our fellowship with fellow Christians. What it does mean is that if we have the proper understanding of who and Whose we are, we will long for a heavenly home (Hebrews 11:13-14).

May God bless you and I want to go to heaven with you!