

EXPERIENCING GOD'S PRESENCE AT SUKKOT

“LORD, I LOVE THE
HOUSE WHERE YOU
LIVE, THE PLACE
WHERE YOUR
GLORY DWELLS.”

— PSALM 26:8

The holiday of *Sukkot* is truly one of my favorite times of the year. I love building the *sukkah* (the outdoor hut that resembles the booths in which Israelites lived in the desert during their exile in biblical times) and making it my home for the seven days of the holiday. Together with my family and lots of guests, we eat meals in our *sukkah*, study *Torah*, sing, and dance. Because of the commandment to make the *sukkah* into a temporary house for seven days, my husband even sleeps there!

The walls of our *sukkah* are covered in decorations that my children made in school, and the roof is composed of special palm branches — *schach*, as they are called in Hebrew — that allow us to see the stars through the roof. It truly feels like an ancient home.

When I am sitting in my *sukkah* and hear my neighbors singing their praises to God in the *sukkah* next door, I look up to the heavens and thank Him for giving us the Jewish homeland. Only in Israel do all households — as well as businesses and even government buildings — build *sukkot* (the plural form of *sukkah*). Every *sukkah* has at least three walls built, and often people don't even add a fourth wall, just to show passersby that they are welcome to come in.

Tradition holds that on each day of *Sukkot* a different biblical forefather comes to visit the *sukkah* as a guest of honor — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon are all present. As I was building my *sukkah* this year, I realized the message that this tradition is trying to impart to us: If we build our house upon a holy foundation with godly intentions, God's presence will dwell there.

The *sukkah* is truly the merging of heaven and earth. We create a holy structure to protect and surround us, just as the cloud of glory protected the Israelites while they wandered in the desert. Though it's a simple structure, I think of it as being a temple, just like the Temple that stood in Jerusalem and will one day stand again as a resting place for God's glory. So too, when we build the *sukkah* as the *Torah* commands and fill it with holiness, God's glory rests within it.

Sukkot serves as a reminder of days past as well of what is to come. Just as the Jews witnessed God's miraculous salvation when we were taken out of Egypt and brought to Israel, so too, will we witness a new reality when the Messiah comes and spreads peace and love throughout the world. The holiday of *Sukkot* is a taste of what this will feel like, and I cherish every moment of this seven-day holiday that God gave us as a blessed gift.



A modern-day sukkah

GOING DEEPER FOR CHRISTIANS

Where do you feel God's presence in a special way? What do you do to connect with God?

Read also:

- John 1:14
- 1 Corinthians 3:16
- Ephesians 2:21–22
- 2 Peter 3:13