

# ***Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life***

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## **Inspire Joyfully**

How do you *celebrate* God's presence in your life?

What is an example of a way you have *celebrated* that drew others eagerly?

What is one way you would be excited to *celebrate* with your church community? Are you willing to help make it happen?

**2 Samuel 6:12-19** – <sup>12</sup>It was told King David, “The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; <sup>13</sup>and when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. <sup>14</sup>David danced before the Lord with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. <sup>15</sup>So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet...<sup>17</sup>They brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the Lord. <sup>18</sup>When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts, <sup>19</sup>and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins.

### **1) Party Like It's 1999...**

Why do we *celebrate*? Victory, accomplishment, diversion... For some, life seems a grind with little if anything to *celebrate*. It is tempting to think life absurd and party life away. In this results-driven, winner-take-all, look-out-for-number-one culture, it is equally easy to believe most of life is insignificant, offering few occasions worth

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*celebrating*. Both are insidious, life-stealing deceptions. The thriving church will seize upon the opportunity created by these deceptions, adopting biblical methods of *celebration* that create an inspiring atmosphere.

♦ **Celebrate everything**: It is common to hear people *celebrate* the simple fact it is Friday. This expresses the ethos that the work week is a struggle, one in which we trade what we want to do for what we must do. We are invited to *celebrate* the freedom from that drudgery. This is a bit of God's grace going before us, awakening us to the meaningless absurdity of life without divine purpose, but it is misplaced in empty *celebrations*. Just prior to this text, David is at the pinnacle of worldly life. He has consolidated his kingdom, taken Jerusalem by defeating the last of the Canaanites, and defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 5). Foreign kings have sent materials and craftsmen to build his palace. He is prospering in every way. Yet he reserves his *celebration* for the pursuit of his purpose, "that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel (2 Sam 5:12)." There is more to life than fame and fortune.

♦ **Are we there yet?** Then there is the half-glass-empty crowd. Meaningful accomplishments are a long time in the making. Along the way there are milestones of achievement. The pessimistic deny opportunities to *celebrate* obvious signs of progress. *We haven't done anything yet*. God's chosen receive the gift of faith that God will fulfill His promises. David learns that "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God (6:12)," he decides it is time to bring the ark to Jerusalem. This is his second attempt to do so. Yet, before he has succeeded and prior to any resulting blessings for himself, he acts "with rejoicing (v12)." David perceives the good in *celebrating* acts of significance rather than the results.

## II) Join the Party...

This may be a bit confusing. Our biblical example neglects remarkable *celebrations* over military victories, while remarking a lot at the *celebration* during an attempt to move the ark. How do we discern what is significant enough to *celebrate*? There are clues that lead to a firm understanding we can apply in daily life.

♦ **Family reunion**: There are few who will deny that uniting and reuniting of loved ones are occasions worth *celebrating*. Weddings, births, adoptions, the return home after a long time away. David had

the insight that he was established king "for the sake of [God's] people Israel (5:12)." The ark was the symbol of God's presence. The act of bringing the ark to Jerusalem was the significant reunion of God and His people.

♦ **Welcome home**: The intensity of *celebrations* increases with expectations of permanence. We *celebrate* births extensively knowing it is a permanent increase of one's family. David expected this divine reunion to be permanent. When the ark is brought into the city, they "set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it (6:17)." David had long enjoyed the presence of God in his personal life, hearing from Him through prayer and honoring Him in praise, worship, and obedience. He *celebrated* because He gets to share this intimate, eternal relationship with all of God's chosen people.

## III) Notorious Partiers...

If bringing the ark, a physical symbol of God's presence, was worth *celebrating*, how much more is our gathering in the name of Jesus knowing the Holy Spirit joins us? This text reveals more than what is worth *celebrating*, it is an example of how we ought to express the power, the generosity, the love of God to those desperate for His presence in their lives.

♦ **Rejoice in gratitude**: David interrupts the journey "when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces (v13)," so that he could express gratitude with a sacrifice. He recognized God's grace in His willingness to dwell among the people and gave thanks. But this was no solemn occasion. He then "danced before the Lord with all his might (v14)." His *celebration* was infectious, "and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet (v15)." Our *bold stories* of God's power working in our personal lives attract people eager to know He is real. Our *celebration* of His presence inspires them to participate.

♦ **Party generously**: Arriving triumphantly with the ark is not enough for David. He *celebrates* that God is taking residence by giving offerings that both express gratitude and generosity. These offerings are a *celebratory* feast for "all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women (v19)." As food is shared, "he blessed the people in the name of the Lord (v18)." David *celebrates* with joy and desire to unite the people with God. The church breathes life into our testimonies of hope, joy, and love as we *celebrate* in exciting, fun ways that invite people into the kingdom of God. Let's *celebrate* and cause an epidemic of FOMO in Flagstaff.