

---

# The house of peace

Contributed by John White  
Wednesday, 13 February 2008

The identification of the house of peace (inhabited by a man of peace) is apparently central to the Lord's strategy.

The House of Peace 12/2002

These days the Lord seems to be emphasizing the principles found in Luke 10 (and Mt. 10) as being important in church planting. One of these principles is identifying "the house of peace" and "the man (or woman) of peace".

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house." Lk. 10:5-7

The identification of the house of peace (inhabited by a man of peace) is apparently central to the Lord's strategy. ("Do not move around from house to house.") This is the first order of business for the "worker" (church planter). It seems that this house is to become the base of operation in "every town and place where he was about to go". (10:1) The word "church" is not used in Luke 10 but I believe it is reasonable to assume that this is the strategy that the disciples used in planting churches in the subsequent decades. (Probably this is what Peter is doing in Acts 10 with Cornelius.)

The problem is that there is no passage in Scripture that defines a "house of peace" (or a "man of peace"). It has been suggested that "A person of peace is someone that God has sovereignly prepared to hear and receive the gospel of the kingdom. A new group of church is usually about to form with the emergence of a person of peace." I find this to be a very helpful and reasonable description of the "man of peace".

To this, I would like to add some further insights.

In seeking to understand these terms, we must keep in mind the obvious fact that Jesus was a Jewish rabbi training

Jewish workers to bring the Kingdom to the homes and towns of Jewish people (ie, God's people). While the principles of Luke 10 certainly have application for planting churches among pagans, we must first make sure we understand them in their original Jewish context.

To this end, I want to recommend a wonderful book by Marvin Wilson - Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith. Here's what he says about the "house of peace":

"The Hebrew Scriptures command that the people of God must "seek peace and pursue it (Ps. 34:14b). In Judaism, therefore, one of the most important family values is that of shalom bayit, "a peaceful home" (or "a house of peace"). In the presence of strangers or among casual acquaintances in the community, it is usually not too difficult to pass the test of shalom. But shalom is difficult maintain in the home. There the true mettle of one's character is tested on a day-by-day basis...

A shalom bayit is a home marked by the absence of strife. But shalom bayit is far more than a negative concept; it is decisively positive. The Hebrew word shalom is filled with strong and rich imagery. Shalom comes from a very meaning "to be whole, sound, entire, well, complete, perfect." The rabbis often used shalom as a name for God, in that he is the sum of perfection and accordingly his Messiah is described as sar shalom, "Prince of Peace" (see Is. 9:6). Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible often employs the word shalom in the sense of "be in friendship, in right relations, in harmony" with others. It may also convey the idea of tranquillity, the freedom from strife both externally and internally." p. 217-218.

What if Jesus is looking for a shalom bayit as a base of operations (ie, church) to reach your neighborhood? This would mean that the starting point for church planting is the development of a shalom relationship between a husband and wife and between parents and children in a particular house. (Could also be a shalom relationship between single roommates, etc.)

What if a million Christian (ie, God's people) households in the US got hold of this idea? A million shalom bayits from which the Kingdom could permeate a million neighborhoods?

"Every home a church"