

# Strengthen the Stakes

The last phrase in our text found in Isaiah 54:2 is '*strengthen the stakes*', literally make your tent pegs bigger and stronger.

Growing and expanding is wonderful, but there has to be the stability and strength to underpin and sustain that growth.

Tent pegs are driven into the ground and they have to be strong enough to take the load and deep enough to stay secured. To me this is a picture of our devotional life.

It is the inner life that equips us and underpins us as we grow bigger and taller for God. A tall tree without deep roots is just an accident waiting to happen.

## **1. *The Essentials of the Christian Devotional Life.***

The essentials of the Christian devotional life are things like Prayer, Worship and the Reading/Study of the Bible.

These are the essential activities that keep us secure and stable, they are the dimensions that we need to grow, strengthen and deepen.

I am not going to specifically teach on them, but rather to look at some really important companions to these activities that we need commit to. For example – '*being responsive*'.

## **2. *The Response Problem***

It is a sad fact that most of us do not respond to God in a consistently good way. The story of the 10 lepers found in Luke 17:12 – 19.

They were all healed, they all got their lives back – but only one responded. Maybe one other had a really good excuse, but at least 8 were unresponsive.

This is true in so many Church situations and one of the great challenges of Church leadership is to lead people from live of 'unresponsiveness' to that of 'being responsive'.

### **3. *The Responsive Heart***

What lies at the root of the matter is a responsive heart. A responsive heart generally has certain qualities...

A responsive heart is SOFT – it is easily moved and touched by the Spirit of God. (Ezek 36:26 ... a heart of flesh as opposed to a heart of stone)

A responsive heart is FLEXIBLE – rigidity can be dangerous. God does things in different ways and through different voices – we need to flow with the Wind.

A responsive heart seeks CHANGE – my greatest need is to be more like Jesus. I must keep moving and changing to become more like Him.

A responsive heart POSITIONS itself – you may want to catch a wave, but if you are in the wrong place ... you won't. Position yourself for blessing!

### **4. *Response enhancers***

This is really practical stuff. You can strengthen and enhance your response by doing some really practical things.

Always be available – make it a prayer and a confession over your life. I'm available, I'm ready, speak Lord!

Sit in a responsive place – the Psalmist speaks about sitting in the seat of mockers (Psalm 1); you can sit in the seat of the silent (the 8) or you can sit in the seat of the responsive.

Speak out a good response - say 'Amen, I agree', or 'Praise God'. Your tongue is like your rudder, it will steer you toward a response.

Singing and pray in the Spirit – the presence and fullness of the Spirit causes our hearts to commune with God. (Eph 5:19)

***Let's be responsive. Responsive to God, responsive to one another and responsive in the way we live our lives in general!***