Life Connexion Group Study Notes
Revival Requires Holy Altars
Date: 25 October 2026

Series Overview

Throughout this holiness series, we have explored how God forms a people who reflect His character, carry His presence and make Jesus visible in the world. Biblical holiness is not outward religious performance or withdrawal from ordinary life. It is wholehearted belonging to God, expressed through obedience, worship, character and mission.

The previous study considered a return wholeheartedly to God and to welcome the conviction that prepares us for spiritual renewal. This week Ps Samuel turns to the inner altar from which faithful public witness must flow. Before the Church asks God to change its city, it must allow Him to examine its worship, loyalties and fellowship with Him.

Introduction

Ps Samuel's message brings together consecration, revival and mission. At Mount Carmel, Israel remained religious but had divided loyalties. Elijah did not begin by creating excitement or improving a program. He called the people near, repaired the broken altar of the Lord and confronted their compromise. Only then did the fire fall and the people confess that the Lord alone is God.

The message also began with a practical call to take the gospel into our neighbourhood. This connection matters: genuine fellowship with God leads to obedience and service. The altar is not an escape from mission; it is the place where our hearts are surrendered so that God can send us.

> **Revival does not begin when the crowd becomes excited. It begins when the heart returns to God.**

Key Scriptures

1 Kings 18:21 and 30–39
Elijah challenged Israel to stop wavering between two loyalties. He called the people near, repaired the altar of the Lord, prepared the sacrifice and prayed that God would turn their hearts back. The fire of the Lord fell and the people confessed, "The Lord, He is God."

James 4:8
Under the new covenant, God graciously calls sinners to draw near rather than remain at a distance. Through the blood of Jesus, the way into God's presence has been opened. We therefore turn from divided loyalties and return to Him with purified hearts and wholehearted devotion.

Joel 2:12 and Zechariah 1:3
God repeatedly calls His people to return to Him wholeheartedly. His call exposes sin, but it is also an expression of covenant mercy: He confronts His people because He has not abandoned His redemptive purpose for them.

Revival Requires Holy Altars

1. Revival begins when the heart returns to God

Israel's deepest problem was not an absence of religion but corrupted worship. The people still knew the God of Israel, yet they had also accommodated Baal. They wanted God's covenant blessings while preserving rival sources of security and worship. Elijah therefore asked, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21).

This divided allegiance is syncretism: mixing worship of the true God with beliefs, values or practices that contradict Him. It can appear whenever culture, comfort, approval, success, possessions, relationships or personal preference are allowed to compete with God for first place.

> **The greatest obstacle to revival is not always opposition outside the Church, but compromise within it.**

Before asking God to change our city, we must invite Him to examine His Church. Revival is not merely increased religious excitement. It is a return to covenant faithfulness, obedience and worship of God in His holiness.

2. The altar must be repaired before the fire falls

The order of the Mount Carmel account is important. Elijah first invited the people to come near. He then repaired the altar that had been torn down, prepared the sacrifice and prayed. The fire came after the altar had been restored. Consecration preceded manifestation.

In Scripture, the altar represents worship, surrender, covenant remembrance and sacrifice. A broken altar points to neglected fellowship, compromised worship or a life in which God no longer holds first place. Repairing the altar means returning to God, removing rival allegiances and offering ourselves to Him again.

> **The first sound of revival is not the roar of the crowd, but the call of God: "Come near to Me."**

The fire did not fall because Elijah manipulated an atmosphere. The prophets of Baal had already demonstrated frantic religious performance. Elijah simply obeyed God's Word and trusted God to reveal Himself. We cannot manufacture revival; we can respond to God's gracious invitation with repentance and surrender.

3. God seeks relational surrender, not religious performance

A church may be busy without burning with holy devotion. It may have excellent programs, gifted musicians, persuasive preaching, impressive facilities and a full calendar, yet still lack the spiritual vitality that comes from intimate fellowship with God. These resources can serve God's purposes, but they cannot replace His presence.

> **A church can have a full program and an empty altar.**

Revival is relational before it is experiential. It is not defined by excitement, atmosphere or physical sensation. God calls His people to draw near, repent and renew fellowship with Him. The issue is not whether we can create a powerful meeting, but whether our hearts are wholly His.

God's grace initiates this return. He sent Elijah, spoke His Word and summoned the people. Romans 2:4 teaches that God's kindness leads us to repentance. Even repentance is not a human achievement that forces God to act; it is our response to His merciful initiative.

> **God is not looking for religious performance. He is calling for relational surrender.**

God welcomes repentant sinners, but He does not bless the idols that enslave them. We cannot pursue intimacy with Christ while deliberately preserving patterns of disobedience. Drawing near to God necessarily includes turning away from whatever has taken His rightful place.

Repairing the Altar in Everyday Life

Personal altar
Establish a daily period of undistracted fellowship with God. God is with us throughout the day, but a relationship also requires focused attention. Set aside time to pray, worship, meditate on Scripture and allow the Holy Spirit to examine your heart.

- Identify anything that consistently takes priority over fellowship with God.
- Return to regular prayer and thoughtful meditation on Scripture.
- Practise gratitude, remembering that every good gift comes from God.
- Respond quickly when the Holy Spirit exposes sin, compromise or divided loyalty.

Family altar
Restore simple rhythms of prayer, Scripture reading and spiritual conversation within the home. Let children and other family members witness genuine devotion rather than receiving only religious instruction. A family altar does not need to be complicated; it needs to be sincere and consistent.

Corporate altar
The Church should make room for biblical repentance, earnest prayer and worship that directs attention to God rather than human personalities. Honest repentance demonstrates that God is merciful and that holiness matters. Corporate prayer expresses our dependence upon Him rather than upon our own organisation or skill.

The Pattern of Revival



Revival begins with God's gracious call and our wholehearted response. As divided loyalties are surrendered, the altar of fellowship is repaired. From that restored relationship, God forms a worshipping and witnessing people who carry His presence into their homes, church and neighbourhood.

1. **Revival begins when the heart returns to God.**
   Renounce divided allegiance and return wholeheartedly to the Lord.

2. **The altar must be repaired before the fire falls.**
   Restore prayer, Scripture, worship, repentance and undistracted fellowship with God.

3. **God seeks relational surrender, not religious performance.**
   Refuse to substitute activity, excellence or emotional excitement for covenant faithfulness.

Reflection Questions

What does the relationship between your fellowship with God and your service for Him reveal about the condition of your altar—are you becoming so occupied with His work that you neglect His presence, or has neglected fellowship made you reluctant to serve?

Scripture Memory Challenge

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."

- James 4:8