



Do you know of any Christians who celebrate Sukkot ?

[repeated from a previous year, since I was asked the question again this year]

It's probably a good idea to start out by defining what Sukkot is. Sukkot is the Hebrew word for "booths" (also called "tabernacles"). Today we'd call them "tents." It is one of the "Big Three" festivals God commanded the Israelites to celebrate each year. (The other two being Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost).

Sukkot is a week-long celebration during which the Israelites were instructed to live in booths. Living in tabernacles was to serve as a reminder of how God miraculously provided for them while they lived in these tents during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt.

As with most things in the Old Testament, the Sukkot Feast points ultimately to Jesus - who came to earth and "Tabernacled among us" at His birth (John 1:14). The Sukkot Feast also helps us look forward to that day when Jesus returns to fulfill the prophecy about eternity in Revelation 21:3 where: "Now the tabernacle of God is with men and He will tabernacle with them." Think about that! God literally pitches His tent among us, with us and next to us! What an amazing day (and eternity) that will be!

Sukkot is also referred to as the "Festival of Ingathering," because it was to be celebrated "after you have gathered in the crops of the land" (Leviticus 23:39). The celebration begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the Hebrew calendar, which ends up being late September/early October in our year. It was to be a joy-filled week of thanksgiving to God for providing the harvest that had just been gathered. You can read more details in Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, Numbers 29 and Deuteronomy 16.

My answer to the initial question was this, "I don't know of any Christians who celebrate Sukkot, but there is no reason why we couldn't. In fact, I think it is a great idea." And, this year, Violet and I had the opportunity to attend a Sukkot Feast hosted by some Christian believers. It was indeed a joyful reminder of what God has already done and will do when Jesus returns!

Here's why I said it was a great idea to celebrate Sukkot:

Do we have a harvest of crops to give thanks to God for each year? Of course we do! Has God protected and provided for us as we've wandered through the "wilderness of life?" Of course He has - sometimes in miraculous ways just as He did those forty years of wanderings for the Israelites! Do we need reminders to thank God for those things? Absolutely!

As a matter of fact, I would suggest that our Thanksgiving Day is actually a Feast of Ingathering. It is a day we set aside to joyfully give thanks for the harvest - and for God's protection of us as we wandered through the "wilderness" of life during the past year.

It's not "Sukkot," per se, and we won't put up tents, but I'd invite you to take time to celebrate this year's harvest and give thanks for all God has done for us this past year by joining us for worship at 7:00pm on Thanksgiving Eve.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net