Day 1

Unless the Lord Builds the House

Scripture Reading

Psalm 127:1–5

Key Verse

"Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."
Psalm 127:1

Today's Devotional

Every successful project begins with careful planning. Builders study blueprints. Teachers prepare lessons. Businesses develop strategies. Churches organize volunteers, establish budgets, recruit leaders, and create schedules.

Planning is wise.

Preparation is biblical.

But Psalm 127 reminds us that no amount of human effort can accomplish what only God can do.

Solomon, the wisest king who ever lived, understood something that we often forget. It is entirely possible to work hard, plan well, and still labor in vain if the Lord is not at work. The Hebrew word translated *vain* carries the idea of emptiness, futility, or accomplishing something that ultimately lacks lasting value. Human effort, no matter how sincere, cannot produce spiritual life.

That truth is especially important for us during this season.

Over the coming weeks, many people will work tirelessly to prepare for September 20. Volunteers will be trained. Children's classrooms will be organized. Worship teams will rehearse. Coffee will be brewed. Signs will be placed. Schedules will be adjusted. New guests will be welcomed.

Every one of those tasks matters.

Yet none of them can save a single soul.

Only God can do that.

Likewise, our Elders continue seeking the man God has chosen to become our Associate Pastor. They will read resumes, conduct interviews, evaluate doctrine, examine experience, and pray over every decision. Those are necessary responsibilities entrusted to them by God.

But ultimately, only the Chief Shepherd knows whom He has prepared.

This realization should not discourage us—it should encourage us. The success of Christ's church does not ultimately depend upon our abilities. It depends upon His faithfulness.

Jesus made this promise:

"I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matthew 16:18)

Notice whose church it is.

"My church."

Notice who builds it.

"I will build."

That promise frees us from both pride and fear.

If ministry seems successful, we cannot take the credit.

If ministry becomes difficult, we need not lose hope.

Christ remains committed to building His church.

As we begin these forty days together, let us lay down every tendency toward self-reliance. Let us acknowledge that we cannot manufacture revival, produce spiritual growth, or create lasting fruit through our own strength.

Instead, let us ask God to do what only He can do.

May every plan we make be surrendered to Him.

May every decision begin with prayer.

May every ministry point people to Christ.

And may September 20 become memorable not because we launched another worship service, but because God graciously chose to work among His people.

Think About It

1. Where am I tempted to rely on my own strength instead of God's?
2. Am I praying as earnestly as I am planning?
3. What would change if I truly believed that Christ alone builds His church?

Today's Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We confess that it is easy to trust our own abilities more than Your power. Forgive us for the times we have planned without praying or worked without depending upon You.

As our church prepares for a second worship service, remind us continually that every ministry belongs to You. Build what only You can build. Save those only You can save. Lead us where only You can lead.

Guide our Elders with wisdom as they seek the Associate Pastor You have already prepared. Keep us humble, united, and faithful. Above all, glorify Your Son through every decision we make.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Today's Fast

Consider fasting from one meal today.

Use the time you would normally spend eating to slowly read Psalm 127 and pray for the ministries of Riva Trace Baptist Church.

Prayer Focus

Pray that every ministry of Riva Trace Baptist Church would remain completely dependent upon God's power rather than human ability.