

## Sitting in the House of the Lord

Rabbi Baum

Parshat Ki Teitzei, August 28, 2020

For the first time in nearly six months, a minyan will be held inside of the shul for Kabbalat Shabbat.

While not everyone is ready or able to come inside, or even to attend outside minyanim, I did not want this moment to pass without commenting on how we have come to appreciate what we often take for granted. While we have been davening inside for the last couple of weeks in the morning, we have not yet had the privilege to greet Shabbat inside our beautiful Torah & Tefilla epicenter. Kabbalat Shabbat at a shul has historic and halachic importance. It is the place where farmers, laborers, and scholars joined together after many of them were not able to attend services during the week (Shabbat 24b). While not everyone was able to arrive at the same time for davening, the community walked home together from shul in unison, strengthening and protecting each other. An addition, Magen Avot, was made to the davening, specifically at a permanent shul, to facilitate everyone finishing the prayers at the same time and walking home together (Shulcha Aruch Orach Chaim 268). This is why even through months of off-campus shul-sanctioned minyanim being said, this addition has not been added. As important as these venues are, and they have played a fundamental role for the attendees and for the shuls reentry process, they are still not defined as a Beit Knesset (Rav Asher Weiss Inyana Di'Yomo #4 Sivan 5780). Before Corona, for many of us, sitting in shul during Kabbalat Shabbat with a broad population was symbolic of our entering Shabbat not only as individuals but as a reunited community. We have missed all of this for almost half a year, and will have some semblance of it this evening. We wish that it would be with greater numbers, not at social distance, and with full singing. But we are grateful to Hashem and to our kehilla for every step we take. We commit to never forget the amazing gift, which is still missing for so many of us, of "sitting in the House of the Lord." This is what we have been praying for in the L'Dovid for the last week, what we have been yearning for the last six months, and for what we will experience as soon as possible with the help of our Creator and Sustainer and your continued compliance with the safety precautions to be able to strengthen and support each other.