

Designing with Purpose

by Deana Murphy

Most often at the onset of a New Year with Christmas holidays behind, people are likely to get in the creative mode. The beginning of a new year in some way incites creativity and motivation for change. Included with the desire to change may arise enhancing our lives; often enrolling at the gym and eating healthier meals. Much the same comes about for the home. Refreshing and renewing worn places ranks high on our to-do list. For many of us, we seek to get our home in order and finally decorate those neglected and tough to tackle areas.

Ready for a Change!

When I think about changing my home environment it reminds me of how Jesus changed the darkened, hidden places of my being into a ray of light and hope. With beaming anticipation I knew He had a purpose for my life. I was ready for a change. Venturing into a home make-over, whether one room or the entire home, can produce this same optimism. But before you jet out to the store to make your purchases, prepare yourself for the change. Consider what you want your home to accomplish for you. More importantly, how can your home design unify your family? Do you want it to remind you of the warmth and security of your home as a child? Or would you like it to help cancel the pain of the past? What about a design that will accommodate every family member's desires and needs?

Too often we acclimatize lifestyles and living at home to the layout and features of the home. Imagine how our lives would be if God didn't first re-arrange the universe. He designed His world in His majestic display of power with purpose. The same holds true for every design or decorating endeavor we undertake. Design changes should serve with purpose. I'm not only talking about designing to appeal to forms and aesthetics. And I'm certainly not referring to making changes because your best friend or neighbor's home is outdoing yours. That's not purpose, that's pressure. Designing with purpose means to have a plan.

Planning the Design

Looking back over Scripture it is apparent that God did nothing without a plan. From the design of the world in Genesis to the soon and coming King in Revelation, His plan has always been wooing His people to Himself. It didn't matter how impossible the darkened world looked, God had a plan for the design of His world. He knew exactly what He wanted His design to do for Him and His family. This says to me that we must do no less when designing our home. Let's consider the gathering or family room for example. This room generally serves as a multi-purpose area where we relax and entertain, play and work, or watch TV, read and do homework. But we certainly can't engage all these activities simultaneously. And someone has to plan the room's layout and décor for incorporating these activities. Then the schedule must be planned.

Meeting of the Minds

Actually the way you live at home determines how you should plan your design. If relationships are centered in your heart, then making a place that unifies the family and connects family with friends is one way to define the purpose of the home. Perhaps working from home defines a major purpose for redesigning the home. Evaluate the use of each space. I often advise my clients to have a design meeting with their families. In this meeting discuss what is important to each household member, write it down, and be willing to compromise and be flexible when possible. While function is a major consideration in the design process; what's paramount is the emotional and spiritual well-being of the entire household. Here are a few suggestions to discuss in the design meeting:

Objection

- What is the main purpose for making design changes? More space? A better lay-out? New purchases? Reworking some existing things? Insulation to stifle the sound of drum practice or electronic games?
- Do you want your home to reflect your spiritual life? If so, what would you need to do to be ready to reflect this? Would it be more patience with each other? Like-mindedness with your spouse? Unselfishness?
- Does your lifestyle define how you live at home? What functions must be performed for each room?

Editing

- Walking through the home and carefully looking at each room, what do you see that needs to be done?
- What do you see that needs to be removed? What isn't needed that can be donated or just simply thrown away?
- Are there any hard places in your heart needing editing? What about spurts of anger over something simple as tidying up behind someone or taking out the trash?

Ambience

- What kind of atmosphere do you want? Do you want it to be peaceful? energetic? restful? loving?
- What kind of atmosphere can you create that will sustain His Presence?
- Atmosphere is very important to the Lord. Remember that He transformed space to separate the waters so He could design an atmosphere called heaven.
- How is the atmosphere of your heart? Does it need renovating? Only a touch-up? Do you have the right spirit in your heart? What about your attitude?
- What style, objects and activities will be pleasing to the Holy Spirit? Everything that looks good may not necessarily be sanctioned by God.

Bringing Order

- How can you arrange your activities to undermine any negative habits and keep the home in order?

- Assess your needs for bringing clarity to what to do with what you have.
- Which spaces can you use in untraditional ways if functional issues arise?
- In what ways can you adjust and show more love and respect for each other?

Sentiments

- How can you incorporate past places of influence into the design?
- How can you incorporate those pleasant childhood memories into the design?
- How can you incorporate priceless family traditions into the design?

Cultural

- Are there any cultural influences and can it be included?
- Talk about your differences and how to effectively translate them into the design.

Preferences

- What are your likes and dislikes?
- What are your individual interests?

Bonding

- When and where is family time together? It maybe as simple as sitting around the table sharing your day.
- Remember children are people too. Don't make the design so important that they aren't allowed to enjoy it.

Differences

- Discuss personalities, values, and memories. This carries a high price in keeping peace at home.

Improvements

- What changes will benefit everyone and fortify the family?
- What are some practical ways to improve on what you have?
- How can you better designate the existing spaces to meet your family's needs?

These lists are not all inclusive, but know how vital it is to do this. So much time is used when planning activities to entertain friends, but planning the details with purpose for living at home is oftentimes overlooked. When you think about it, you spend more time in your home than any other place, which makes home design the most influential art form. In view of that, home is an important part of health, spiritual and well-being of your family.

God is a family man. For this reason I put a lot of emphasis on family living at home because it is important to Him. Did you ever consider that He created the family and a place for them to live before He created the church? The Garden was designed so He could fellowship with Adam and Eve. Liken to this He desires our home be designed with the purpose of having His Presence there also. Ephesians 5:15 admonishes to be very careful how you live, not as unwise but as wise. One way to do this is to create a special space in your home to meet with Him each morning. Press into His wisdom. Remove the

anxieties of designing and decorating and seek a fresh start from His word each morning. A comfy chair by a window with a table and good reading light will do. Then the changes that you seek become clearer.

Making changes in our lives and homes is essential and always necessary. I challenge you to begin this New Year with the approach of looking at home design from a different perspective. Yes you are eager to finally decorate those neglected and tough to tackle areas. You're longing for a fresh start. But be mindful of your family's needs, surrender any selfish ways of doing things, and, of course, allow the Presence of the Lord to dwell there. Acknowledge that God has a plan for you which include a plan for your home. Renovating allows for a fresh start. Renovate your heart of those hidden attitudes so that His plan and creativity can rise up within you. James 1:17 (CEV) reminds, "Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He is always the same and never makes dark shadows by changing." Your home is a good gift. Design it with purpose.

Prayer

Lord, in this New Year, give me wisdom to know Your plan and purpose for my home and my life. Remove all distractions that hinders creative ways to make my home work for my family and welcomes Your Presence.