

# Numbers 2:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

## Analysis

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The Levites with the tabernacle marched 'in the midst of the camp' with tribes before and behind. The Hebrew 'tavek' (midst/middle) indicates the tabernacle's centrality - God dwelling at the heart of His people. This arrangement provided both honor (central position) and protection (surrounded by fighting men). The verse adds 'every man in his place by their standards' - ordered worship with everyone knowing their position. This foreshadows the church with Christ at center (Matt 18:20) and believers gathering around Him as our focal point. True spiritual life radiates from God's presence, not peripheral activities.

## Historical Context

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During marches, Judah's three tribes led, followed by Gershonites and Merarites carrying tabernacle structure. Then Reuben's three tribes, followed by Kohathites carrying holy objects (protected front and rear by other tribes), then Ephraim's three tribes, and finally Dan's three tribes as rear guard. This complex organization required careful coordination and showed that worship's centrality shaped all community life. The cloud pillar above the tabernacle (Num 9:15-23) visibly marked God's presence at Israel's heart.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. Is worship central to your life's organization, or merely one peripheral activity among many?
2. How does keeping God's presence at your life's center affect daily decisions and priorities?

## Interlinear Text

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וְעֹזֶר אֶבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ תְּמִימָנָה תְּמִימָנָה  
shall set forward Then the tabernacle of the congregation of the camp  
H5265 H168 H4150 H4264

בְּלֹויִם בְּתִים בְּמִזְבֵּחַ תְּמִימָנָה כְּאֶשֶׁר יְחִנְנוּ כִּי  
of the Levites in the midst of the camp as they encamp H3651  
H3881 H8432 H4264 H834 H2583

וְעֹזֶר אֶשְׁלָמֶל יְדֵי אֶשְׁלָמֶל לְדִגְלִיקָם  
shall set forward every man in his place by their standards H1714  
H5265 H376 H5921 H3027

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 10:21** (Temple): And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came.

**Numbers 10:17** (Temple): And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle.

