

Numbers 2:17

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/num/num-2/numbers-217/>

The next part of the procession was the tent of meeting (the tabernacle). The Levites, who camped around the tabernacle, were to move out with the tabernacle.

The first to set out on a march was the camp of Judah on the east side, followed by the camp of Reuben which camped on the south side. After the tribes on the south side, the LORD commanded that *the tent of meeting shall set out*. The “tent of meeting” (also called the “tabernacle”) was to travel *with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps*. The Levites’ place around the tabernacle was not to change; in fact, *just as they camp, so they shall set out*. They were to camp surrounding the tabernacle, and march surrounding the tabernacle. They were to be arranged by family—*every man in his place by their standards*. This means that the Levites were to be placed around the tabernacle based on families (or clans). The arrangement of the Levite families around the tabernacle is presented in Numbers 3.

Some have observed that, similar to the tabernacle here, the Egyptians usually placed the tent of the king, generals, and high-ranking officers in the center of the camp of their troops. In a similar way, the LORD’s presence in the tabernacle in the middle of the Israelites gave them assurance that He was His people’s “general,” protector, and provider. Thus, it was also a constant reminder that, along with the LORD their King being in the midst of their camp, He should be in the midst of their lives. The Pharaoh claimed to be divine, along with other gods of Egypt. In Israel there was only one King and one God, and they were the same person, the Creator God, who spoke into existence the heavens and earth.

Biblical Text

¹⁷ “Then the tent of meeting shall set out *with* the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards.