

Together We...Need People
Saved People Need other Saved People

Hebrews 10:23-25

Preached by Rev. Craig T. Smith on November 12th, 2023

Together We Need People
Saved People Need People.

[Hebrews 10:24-25](#) "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

People Who Need People are the Luckiest People in the World

As we continue our series focusing on who we are becoming as a church, family we turn our attention to the community of faith that should be cultivated each week.

In his book, *Created for Community*, author Stanley Grenz writes: "...the focus on community encapsulates the biblical message; it stands at the heart of the theological heritage of the church, and it speaks to the aspirations and the sensed needs of people in our world today. In short, as we realize that we are created for community, we are in a position to connect Christian belief with Christian living."

Saved people need other saved people. Not to just sit together. Not to just sing together. We are created to participate in essential relationships. In Genesis 2, God establishes that people are created to be in an essential relationship with Him first and with our spouses second. Genesis says that two become one. Paul expands that understanding of "one fleshness" to the church in Ephesians. The community we experience at church is one of the essential relationships we were created to participate in. And when we come together in that community, we realize that together we need each other.

Although something significant happens when we sit together and when we sing together. But our gatherings are about more than that. It is the essential connections made in discipleship, fellowship and worship.

Our God is a community-building God. Psalm 22 tells us that "God is enthroned on or dwells in the praises of His people."

Jesus teaches that when two or more are gathered *in his name*, he is there among them. Praising and worshiping, Bible study and fellowship, are the resources God uses to build community.

I am able to press on in the ministry because God has blessed me with people who pray for me and exhort me to press on in the fight of faith. I know that many within the church don't feel that sense of support. If that is true for you, we want to help change that. The Bible teaches that surviving and thriving in a life of faith and love depends on Christians intentionally building each other in faith and stirring each other up to love.

Without intentional faith-building togetherness, we lose our zeal, drift from God, become hardened in the deceitfulness of sin, and if someone doesn't yank us back from it (James 5:19; Jude 23) we can make our so-called faith a dumpster fire and perish in unbelief. That is why gathering together in person is essential. (read Hebrews 10:23-25)

Battling Unbelief and Fighting the Fight of Faith

Saved people need other saved people to help us deepen our faith and battle unbelief. Romans 4:20 teaches that belief that glorifies God is future-oriented. It is trusting in the promises of God. We understand that all of God's promises were purchased for sinners who might believe by the death and resurrection of Jesus, something that happened in the past. It is important to realize that God-glorifying *belief* simply doesn't look back and observe those acts of grace. Faith stands on the crucifixion and resurrection. Faith then looks forward to all the promises of God that Jesus bought for us, and faith places its hope on those promises and moves forward. Faith is future-oriented. It is heartfelt hope in the promises of God.

Galatians 5:6 teaches that this kind of belief is the root of love and righteousness. Belief in the promises of God is the foundation of all love and goodness. And then we understand also the flip side of this truth: that *unbelief* is the root of all sin.

The most important priority in the Christian life is learning to overcome unbelief and fighting the fight of faith. Some Christians believe that before they were saved, they were fighting for faith and battling unbelief, but now that they are saved, they can relax and take it easy. Skip a few weeks or even months of worship or Bible study in small group.

They think they can do that because the battle is over. What was it those melodious prophets used to sing? “Now I’m a believer!” They think they have won the battle. That’s a wrong notion. It leaves a Christian very vulnerable to the subtlety of unbelief.

At the end of his life, Paul looked back over decades of being a Christian and says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” He had fought the good fight to keep the faith all his Christian life (2 Timothy 4:7).

The Role of Other Believers in the Fight of Faith

And one of the ways Paul fought the good fight was to always be surrounded by community - believers who would pray for him and exhort him. Paul always traveled in a team. He was not a Lone Ranger. There was Barnabas and Silas and Timothy and Luke and Aristarchus and Mark and Epaphras and others.

Paul’s faith needed human reinforcement. 2 Corinthians 7:5-7 tells us: *For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest but we were afflicted at every turn — fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he told us of your longing.*

If the Apostle Paul needed saved people to help strengthen his faith when fear was beginning to get the upper hand in his life, wouldn’t it make sense that we need that same exact thing? Saved people need other saved people.

Hebrews 10:24–25

With all of that said, let’s look at Hebrews 10. Let’s consider a few points from these verses:

First of all, *we are commanded to meet together*. The kind of meeting seems to be one that allows for some kind of mutual encouragement and stirring up of one another. We know what it is NOT referring to:

It is not talking about sneaking into a worship service and then sneaking out again when the preacher prays at the end. It also has in sight an encouraging, exhorting, challenging meeting. Not one where the latest gossip is shared. And it isn’t referring to gripe time at the small group. Those experiences revolve around the lack of growth and development.

The text is referring to the kind of meeting where you say something to someone that will help them be more loving and vice versa, where someone can say something to you that will help you be more loving. The goal is spur one another on in faith and develop the strength to do more good things for the Lord and for the sake of the gospel. If you leave worship or Sunday school or small group and you don't feel any different, perhaps you are not engaging with the Lord and with others appropriately.

This is why we believe so strongly in small group discipleship. You should be a part of a large group worship experience where you praise and pray together and then sit under the preaching ministry of the church. You should also be involved and invested in a smaller group to grow and study.

When we say, "together we need people," implied in that is this "one another" principle that requires personal interaction with people at a pretty significant level. Only coming to worship on Sunday morning — as important as that is — is not enough. Only attending small group discipleship — as important as that is — is not enough. God means for us to praise and pray and engage in the sermon together and also face each other in small groups so that we can exhort and encourage each other to press on.

Avoiding the Habit of Not Meeting

The second point is *don't get into the habit of not meeting*. This seems almost the same as the first point, but verse 25 gives it special attention. It says, "Not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing."

The warning here is that not meeting with other Christians in this way can become habitual. Miss one week for this issue. Miss another week because of this nagging cough. Miss another week to go out of town. Miss another week because you are so busy going that you needed some rest. Suddenly, its been a really long time. Not attending church can easily become habit-forming.

It becomes a habit because you are comfortable with missing. In fact, it might be such a part of your view of the Christian life, that what we're talking about now seems threatening to you. You do not want to hear that the Bible insists that you are outside the Lord's will when you do not meet in some kind of smaller group intentionally designed to stir you up to love and good works. You don't have time to hear that you are not in God's will when you skip worshiping with God's people.

The Bible doesn't give you much elbow room here either. There can be all sorts of reasons that a person decides to stop attending. Everyone has reasons. But the Bible says there is no excuse. Not gathering together is outside of the will of God. Period. The Bible doesn't allow for your reasons.

So my second point is: *don't get into this habit of not meeting in this way.* And if you are in that habit now, resolve to break it in 2023.

Increasing Frequency and Seriousness

The third point is *the frequency and seriousness of your meetings should increase as the Day of Judgment draws near.* At the end of verse 25, it says, "and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." That's the Day of Christ's coming and the end of the age.

As history comes closer to ending, we can expect the stresses, troubles, dangers, toils, and snares to increase. There will be greater satanic activity, greater evil, greater threats to your faith and love.

In Matthew 24, Jesus warned, that many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. That's why we must take seriously what Hebrews 10:25 tells us today.

If our love and faith is going to survive the onslaught of Satan and evil, we must meet with those who can stir us up to love and good works. This is bad news to the Lone Ranger Christians out there as time draws shorter.

Not too long ago, I ran into a very spiritual young man who said that he didn't need to go to church. He could worship Jesus all on his own. Besides, churches only made his faith experience weaker because they didn't really focus on what was most important. That thinking is both wrong and dangerous - to be so isolated and alone. It ignores a pinata full of Scripture that tells us "two are better than one" and "a chord of three strands is not quickly broken" in Ecclesiastes 4; that one believer can sharpen another just like iron sharpens iron in Proverbs 27; Galatians 6 - bear one another's burdens. We are to be meeting together and it isn't to be just hanging out all the time.

Let's make our meeting for prayer and exhortation be more frequent and more serious and urgent as we see the gathering storm of tribulation and evil.

Empowering to Love

Make your meeting together with believers a meeting specifically for the empowering to love. We must be intentional when you gather. Don't just say, "Christian fellowship is good, so we are going to get together and talk." It is good. And talking is wonderful, but the stakes are too high these days to be that casual and blase about your gathering.

Verse 24 literally translated reads, "Consider one another in order to stir each other up to love and good works." There is a clear goal. Whenever we meet together, the goal is to have more power to love, more resources to love, more motivation to love, more wisdom to love and do good works when we leave. That way, according to Jesus, people will see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. Whenever we gather together, the visible glory of God is at stake when we leave. How are we leaving? What are we able and empowered to do?

And not only is there a clear goal, there is an intentional urgency. The word "Consider" suggests that we are to be on the lookout for how we can specifically help other people feel empowered to love. We don't just drift into a worship service or Bible study thinking about all kinds of worldly things. We are supposed to gather on a mission. How can I help someone else get exactly what they need to better show the love of Jesus to a crazy, chaotic world? If we were intentional and urgent, our meetings would look, feel, and lead us out of them differently.

So the fourth point is, *be intentional when you gather together.* Aim at empowering each other to love and good works.

Strengthening Faith in the Promises of God

The last point answers the question, "*How do you spur or empower another person to love and good works?*" The answer is *belief in the promises of God.* So our last point is: *Make the main goal of every gathering be to strengthen faith in the promises of God.*

This is implied in verse 23: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love. . . .” So these two things are very closely related: stirring each other up to love and helping each other hold on to hope in the promises of God.

How do you empower someone to love and good deeds in spite of all the trouble and obstacles they will encounter at school, home, and work? Answer is to build their hope in the promises of God.

Together we need people. Saved people need other saved people to help strengthen faith, spur us on to love and good deeds, battle unbelief, and build our hope in the promises of God. The next time someone asks you why church is so important to you, tell them that is the time that other people point me toward the promises of God.

When we stop meeting, it becomes habit-forming and it weakens our faith, plants us in only in today’s concerns, and we become hardheaded and hard hearted about the sin that creeps and crouches at the doors of our hearts.

Together we need people. Saved people need to gather in worship, discipleship, and fellowship with other saved people.