

**MADE TO CONNECT
SERIES: THIS IS THE WAY
HEBREWS 10:24-25
1.16.22**

MAIN POINT

We are to gather together to spur one another on to love God more and serve Him better.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What types of animals naturally live in groups? What advantages do those animals have by living in packs?

Have you ever gone through a season of life where you did not or could not attend church regularly? What was that experience like? What did you miss the most?

Gathering together as the church is important. When believers gather together, that time is first to be stimulating. We need to stir one another up to love God more and serve him more faithfully. Second, our time together should be regular and frequent. Some believers in the early church had gotten into the habit of not attending church gatherings, but that short-circuited God's work in their lives and exposed them to even greater dangers. Third, we are to use our time together profitably by encouraging, correcting, and comforting one another. As the time of Christ's return gets closer, we should do this more and more.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ HEBREWS 10:24.

How does this group encourage you to obey God and help you love others? How does our group keep you from straying into sin?

Is there anything we can change in our group to help us more effectively stir another up to love and good works?

The author of Hebrews instructed believers to stimulate each other in their time together: “And let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works” (v. 24). A mug of hot cocoa can be delicious, but not until you stir up the powder at the bottom. Similarly, a Christian is to be a blessing to the people in his or her life, but over time, our zeal for loving and serving others tends to die down, like cocoa powder settling at the bottom of a mug.

When we gather with other believers, we are inspired to serve God, as we hear about what others are doing for Him. We are encouraged by stories of how God is helping other people in their lives. We come up with new ideas of how to reach our friends and neighbors with the gospel when we hear what other Christians are doing. Gathering with other believers also helps us get serious about the sin in our lives. We lovingly confront each other and remind each other of the disastrous consequences of sin. Like freshening up a mug of hot cocoa by stirring up the chocolate at the bottom, we leave our gathering ready to turn from sin and obey God.

READ HEBREWS 10:25A.

What can happen to a sheep when it strays from the flock?

What can happen to a Christian when he or she does not come regularly to church?

Like a sheep who wanders from the fold, believers who do not stay closely connected to other Christians will eventually suffer harm. What’s the solution? Regularly attend church and small group meetings. Like the early church, who “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42), make it a priority to be with other believers every week. There is strength in numbers. Staying close to the flock is the best way to stay close to the Shepherd.

What are some specific ways you have experienced blessing by being in close proximity with our church family?

READ HEBREWS 10:25B.

How well do we as a group urge each other to do the right thing? Confront sin in each other's lives? Comfort one another when someone is hurting? What can we do better?

How often do you think about the return of Christ? How do you think it would impact your spiritual life if you thought about this each day?

Finally, the writer of Hebrews instructed believers to encourage each other when they meet: "encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (v. 25b). The Greek word translated "encouraging" in this verse includes the actions of urging, correcting, and comforting. Like brothers and sisters who truly love each other, we should urge each other to do the right thing, confront sin when someone is in the wrong, and speak words of comfort when someone is hurting. Like a family, we need to stick by each other's side through thick and thin.

Jesus told His disciples, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3), but He also said, "concerning that day and hour no one knows" (Matt. 24:36). When He returns, we will be held accountable for the work we have done for Him in this life (Matt. 25:19-30; 1 Cor. 3:13-15). Almost two thousand years have passed since Jesus left (Acts 1:9-11). That means we are two millennia closer to the return of Christ than anyone in the early church! We don't know when Jesus will return, but we do know that "the Day" is drawing nearer and nearer.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some reasons Christians stop coming to church?

Is there anyone in our group who has stopped coming regularly? Why? How can we reach out to those people?

How will living in the ways we've discussed today inside the church give credibility when sharing the gospel with those outside the church?

PRAYER

Pray that God would use you to encourage others and provoke them to deeper faith. Pray for a renewed valuing of the gathered community at our church.

COMMENTARY

HEBREWS 10:24-25

10:22. We can now approach God and have the mercy and grace of our High Priest standing over us. This blessing brings us many privileges. The next three verses contain three exhortations.

The first exhortation is for believers to draw near to God in an expression of personal devotion. Four conditions for approaching God are given.

First, we are to come with a sincere heart. This calls for genuine devotion rather than hypocrisy. Second, we are to come in full assurance of faith. This demands a bold confidence that God has provided full access to his presence through Christ alone. Third, we are to have our hearts sprinkled. . . from a guilty conscience. This demands constant confession of our sins and openness to God. Finally we are to have our bodies washed with pure water. This may be a reference to baptism as an outward commitment to Christ, or it might be symbolic as is the previous reference to hearts sprinkled with blood. If it is symbolic, the hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience would picture our salvation, and our bodies washed would symbolize a righteous lifestyle. In this new state of purity made possible by Jesus, believers can come boldly to God and claim his grace and mercy.

10:23. The second exhortation appeals to us to maintain spiritual consistency. We are urged to hold firmly to the hope we profess. This hope offers glory which beamed more brightly than the glories of the old order. Unswervingly denotes an object which stands absolutely straight, not departing from the perpendicular. We are to lay hold of Christ and never let go, even in the slightest. No persecution, real or feared, was to lessen the ardor of these believers for Christ.

Is it really possible to live unswervingly? If holding on to the promises depended on personal commitment, we would all be in trouble. God is faithful to provide strength and stamina for endurance. His faithful character is beyond all doubt. In his strength we hold on unswervingly. We will read heroic examples of spiritual steadfastness in chapter 11.

10:24. The third exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who

stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only.

We can spur people toward either good or bad works. Hebrews calls us to lead others to a practical expression of love and an attractive display of unselfish deeds.

The three important virtues of faith, hope, and love are mentioned in three consecutive verses (see 1 Cor. 13:13). Faith provides assurance. Hope promises an incentive to obedience. Love provides a foundation for prodding believers to godly living.

10:25. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works.

Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures. Regular fellowship with believers is an essential ingredient in Christian growth. The readers of Hebrews knew that the Day of Christ's return was drawing near. The closeness of this day compelled them to stimulate one another in an outburst of energy and concern.

Persecution may have led some believers to drop out of the fellowship. The remedy they needed was to begin meeting again. The verses following in 26-31 showed the final outcome of neglecting to meet with other believers. Such careless living could produce a contempt for Jesus and a renunciation of Christianity.