

Gathering Question: How would you describe your state of being right now? Are you discouraged or encouraged? Explain your answer. What role do other people play in either your encouragement or discouragement?

Encourage One Another

If you look at the word encouragement long enough, you will see the word “courage” right in the middle of it. You probably don’t even have to go to a Webster’s Dictionary to figure out that the word encouragement means to help someone find courage. The word from which our English translation is made is even richer. It is an active word that means to come along side someone, to come to someone’s aid, or to exhort or urge someone on. It is more than just cheerleading. It implies that a person is actively involved in helping another find the courage that he or she needs to continue on.

It is not surprising then to find this admonition to encourage each other in the Hebrews letter. The Christian audience to whom this letter is written has been through a lot of discouragement. They had suffered some persecution because of their faith in Christ and some were becoming weary. In addition to many other things, the author reminds the weary Christians that they really need each other.

Along with discouragement often comes the temptation to sin – to give up on one’s commitment to the Lord and to his values. The author of Hebrews calls for daily encouragement among believers, so that no one will be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:13). We are not to leave each other alone, because in the absence of brothers and sisters we can fall prey to sin’s lies. We need the challenge of fellow believers and we need to be accountable. We need to be reminded of the Story and we need to be rebuked when we stray.

Later in the letter, the author once again reminds believers of their responsibilities to each other. They are not to give up meeting together but instead they meet regularly to encourage one another.

The bottom line is that we have a responsibility towards one another in the Body of Christ. When one member is struggling with sin or the temptation to sin, another member should be close by to help the struggling one through. It is impossible for us to make it by ourselves. We need others to help us find courage in the midst of very discouraging times.

Read: Hebrews 3:13; 10:19-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Discuss:

1. Is there a connection between being alone and sin? In what ways can Christians encourage each other not to sin?
2. Why is the writer of Hebrews 10:25 so concerned about Christians meeting. Discuss our gatherings. In what ways can our gatherings be an encouragement to us? Are our gatherings mostly encouraging or discouraging to you? Discuss your answers.