

Rooted: Core Truths, Teacher's Guide

Week 7: Worship, Assembly, and Encouragement

Hebrews 10:23–25

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson establishes the core truth of New Testament worship and the gathered assembly of God's people. In Hebrews 10:23–25, the inspired writer issues three linked commands: hold fast the confession of hope, stir one another up to love and good works, and do not neglect to meet together, but encourage one another all the more as the Day draws near. A great deal is at stake doctrinally. The teacher should help students see that the assembly of the saints is not an optional accessory to private faith but part of God's design for His people, that there is a pattern for New Testament worship which the church is to follow, and that faithful gathering is one of the chief means by which God preserves His people in the faith. This is also the natural place to teach the apostolic pattern of worship on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, including the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, the teaching of the word, prayer, singing, and giving, while distinguishing the Lord's Day from an Old Covenant Sabbath. The aim is a high, joyful, and biblically grounded view of the assembly.

This doctrine is also deeply formative and timely. We live in an age of spiritual individualism, where many believers, and many who once gathered faithfully, have come to treat the assembly as optional, especially with sermons available on a screen. The result is a host of cooling coals, drifting quietly from the fire. The truth of this passage speaks directly to that drift. It calls passive spectators to become engaged worshipers, and consumers who come only to receive to become members who come to give and build up others. The teacher's task is to let this doctrine do its forming work, rekindling a love for the gathered worship of God and a sense of personal responsibility for the faith and warmth of the whole body.

So aim at both targets. Send students home with a clear, biblical understanding of why the church gathers, how God's people are to worship according to the New Testament pattern, and how faithful assembly guards perseverance. And send them home more committed to gathering, more engaged in worship, and more intentional about encouraging one another. The disciple we are forming is not a lone coal trying to stay warm by itself, but a faithful member of the fire, holding fast, worshiping wholeheartedly, and helping keep the whole church burning until the Day.

Question 1

Student Question:

The writer commands us not to be “neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some” (v. 25). Why is gathering together so important for the people of God, and what does it say about God’s design for our faith that He calls us to assemble rather than to follow Him in isolation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the simple force of the command: do not neglect “to meet together, as is the habit of some.” The writer treats the gathering of God’s people as essential, not optional, and he notes with concern that some had already fallen into the habit of staying away. The teacher should help students feel that this is not a minor housekeeping instruction tucked into the letter, but part of the urgent pastoral heart of Hebrews, written to keep wavering believers from drifting away.

Show that the assembly reflects God’s design for faith. From the beginning, God has called not just individuals but a people: a congregation in the wilderness, a nation, and now the church, the gathered assembly of the redeemed. The very word for church in the New Testament means an assembly, a called-out gathering. God could have saved us into isolated, private relationships with Himself. Instead He saves us into a body, a family, a people who belong to one another and are meant to live the Christian life together. To follow Christ in deliberate isolation is to live against the grain of how God designed His people to function.

Help students see what the gathering provides that solitude cannot. In the assembly we worship God together, hear His word proclaimed, share in the Lord’s Supper, sing and pray with one voice, confess our hope in one another’s hearing, and bear one another’s burdens. These are corporate realities by nature; they cannot be fully experienced alone on a couch. The teacher can acknowledge that private devotion matters greatly, while insisting that it was never meant to replace the gathered worship and fellowship of the saints.

Bring it home. The question is not merely whether a person can technically be a Christian without the assembly, but whether they can be the kind of Christian God calls them to be, growing, persevering, and useful to others, while neglecting the very gathering He designed to sustain them. The honest answer of this passage is no. We need the fire, and the fire needs us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The assembly as essential to God’s design, not an optional add-on
- The biblical pattern of God calling and saving a people, not just individuals
- The meaning of the word church as a called-out assembly
- Corporate realities (worship, the Lord’s Supper, mutual encouragement) that cannot be lived in isolation
- Private devotion as vital but not a replacement for the gathered church

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God call us to follow Him together rather than in isolation?

- What does the gathered assembly provide that we cannot get on our own?
- How does neglecting the assembly work against the way God designed our faith to grow?

Question 2

Student Question:

It is easy to let attendance with God's people slide from a priority to an afterthought, fit in only when nothing else competes. Has gathering for worship quietly become optional for you? What has been crowding it out, and what would it take to make it a settled priority again?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the command into a personal examination. For many believers, attendance with God's people has quietly slid from a fixed priority to a flexible option, something they do when nothing else competes for the time. The writer names exactly this drift: it becomes "the habit of some." The aim of this question is to help students notice honestly where they stand on that slope.

Help students identify what has been crowding it out, without heaping on guilt. Sometimes it is genuine hardship; often it is the slow creep of lesser things: weekend travel, fatigue, sports, a busy schedule, or simply the dulling of desire. The screen makes it easy to substitute passive watching for active gathering. Encourage students to name their particular reasons honestly, because we cannot address a drift we will not admit.

Move toward recommitment. Making the assembly a settled priority usually requires a decision made in advance, before the competing options arise, rather than a fresh debate every week. Ask each student whether gathering has become optional for them, what has been crowding it out, and one concrete step they will take to make it a fixed priority again. Frame this not as mere duty but as returning to the fire, for their own sake and for the sake of the body that needs them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The drift from priority to option in church attendance
- Honestly naming what crowds out the assembly
- The screen as a passive substitute for active gathering
- Deciding in advance rather than re-debating attendance each week

Discussion Prompts

- Has gathering with the church quietly become optional for you?
- What has been crowding the assembly out of its place in your life?
- What is one step to make faithful gathering a settled priority again?

Question 3

Student Question:

The writer says, “let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (v. 23). What is this confession of hope we are to hold fast, why are we prone to waver, and how does gathering with the church help us hold on?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question takes up the first of the three commands: “let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” The teacher should help students see that the Christian life involves holding on, maintaining our grip on the truth we have confessed, over a lifetime and through pressure. The confession of hope is the open acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that He died and rose, and that in Him we have a sure hope, including the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

Explain why we are prone to waver. Hebrews was written to believers under pressure, tempted to loosen their grip because faith had grown costly. The same forces work on us: suffering and disappointment, the slow erosion of doubt, the distraction of a busy and comfortable life, and the pressure of a culture that finds our confession increasingly strange. Wavering is rarely a sudden renunciation; it is a gradual loosening of the hands.

Anchor the holding fast in God’s faithfulness. The writer gives the reason we can hold without wavering: “he who promised is faithful.” Our security rests not finally on the strength of our grip but on the trustworthiness of the One we are holding. We hold fast to Him because He holds fast to His promises. This is enormous comfort for the struggling believer: the call to hold on is backed by the faithfulness of God.

Connect holding fast to the assembly, which is the thread tying this passage together. We do not hold fast alone. The very next commands are to stir one another up and to keep meeting together. Gathering with the church is one of God’s chief means of helping us hold on, as we hear the truth confessed, are encouraged in our doubts, and are reminded by others’ faith of the faithfulness of God. The teacher can show students that holding fast and meeting together are not separate duties but one connected way of persevering.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holding fast as maintaining our grip on the confessed truth over a lifetime
- The confession of hope centered on Christ and the sure hope He gives
- Why believers waver (suffering, doubt, distraction, cultural pressure)
- Security grounded in God’s faithfulness, not the strength of our grip
- Gathering with the church as a chief means of holding fast

Discussion Prompts

- What is the confession of hope we are called to hold fast?
- Why are we prone to let our grip on the truth loosen over time?
- How does gathering with God's people help you hold fast?

Question 4

Student Question:

Faith is held more easily together than alone. Where has your own grip on the confession of hope begun to waver, and what is pulling at it, doubt, discouragement, distraction, or the pressure of those around you? How might the gathered church help you hold fast this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the call to hold fast inward. Few believers abandon the faith all at once; most who fall away do so by a slow loosening of the grip, often without noticing. The aim here is to help students identify honestly where their own hold on the confession of hope has begun to weaken, and what is pulling at it.

Help students name the specific pressure. For one it is doubt, questions that have gone unaddressed and quietly eroded confidence. For another it is discouragement, a season of suffering or disappointment that has dimmed hope. For another it is distraction, a comfortable, crowded life that has crowded out the things that feed faith. For another it is the pressure of people around them whose unbelief or compromise exerts a steady pull. Naming the specific pull is the first step to resisting it.

Move toward the help of the body. Because faith is held more easily together than alone, the remedy is often found in the gathered church: bringing doubts into the light with mature believers, being encouraged in a hard season, hearing the confession of hope on others' lips when our own has grown faint. Ask each student where their grip has wavered, what is pulling at it, and one way they will let the gathered church help them hold fast this week, whether by sharing a struggle, seeking out a stronger believer, or simply returning faithfully to the assembly.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Falling away as usually a slow loosening rather than a sudden break
- Common pressures on our grip (doubt, discouragement, distraction, ungodly influence)
- Naming the specific pull as the first step to resisting it
- The gathered church as God's help for holding fast

Discussion Prompts

- Where has your grip on the confession of hope begun to waver?
- What specifically is pulling at your faith right now?
- How will you let the gathered church help you hold fast this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

When the early church gathered on the first day of the week, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7). What does the New Testament show us about how God's people are to worship when they assemble, and why does it matter that we follow the pattern He has given rather than simply our own preferences?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question opens up the pattern of New Testament worship, and the teacher should handle it with both clarity and warmth. While Hebrews 10:25 commands the gathering, the rest of the New Testament shows us what the gathering was for and how the early church worshiped. The first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). When they assembled, they did so to worship the living God according to what the apostles had delivered to them.

Lay out the pattern plainly, drawing the elements from Scripture. The disciples gathered on the first day of the week, the day of the Lord’s resurrection, which John calls “the Lord’s day” (Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10). On that day they came together to break bread, that is, to share in the Lord’s Supper, eating the bread and drinking the cup in remembrance of Christ’s death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). They gave as God had prospered them (1 Corinthians 16:1–2). They devoted themselves to the teaching of God’s word and to prayer (Acts 2:42), and they sang, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord with their hearts (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). This is the simple, God-given shape of the church’s worship.

Explain why following the pattern matters, not as legalism but as reverence and love. Worship is for God, and it belongs to Him to say how He will be worshiped; it is not ours to design according to mere preference or novelty. Throughout Scripture, God has cared deeply about whether His people worship Him as He has directed. To hold to the apostolic pattern is to honor His authority and to keep the church’s worship anchored in what He has revealed, rather than tossed about by every cultural trend or personal taste. This is not a cold concern; it flows from taking God seriously and loving Him enough to worship Him on His terms.

Address the Lord’s Day rightly, since it is often confused. The first day of the week is not a Christian Sabbath, a day hedged about with Old Covenant rules of rest and prohibition. The Old Law, including the Sabbath, was fulfilled and set aside in Christ (Colossians 2:14–17). The Lord’s Day is, rather, the day the Lord’s people gladly gather to worship the risen Christ and remember Him at His table. The teacher can help students see the Lord’s Day not as a burden of regulations but as a joyful weekly appointment with the risen Lord and His people.

Bring it home with gladness. The pattern of New Testament worship is not a dry checklist but a gift: God has told us how to draw near to Him together. The teacher can encourage students to value each element, the Supper, the word, prayer, singing, and giving, as a means of meeting with God and one another, and to come expecting to worship rather than merely to attend.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The early church's devotion to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42)
- Gathering on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)
- The weekly Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)
- Giving, the word, prayer, and congregational singing as elements of worship (1 Corinthians 16:1–2; Colossians 3:16)
- Following the apostolic pattern as reverence for God's authority, not legalism
- The Lord's Day distinguished from an Old Covenant Sabbath (Colossians 2:14–17)

Discussion Prompts

- What does the New Testament show us about how the church is to worship?
- Why does it matter that we worship according to God's pattern rather than our preferences?
- How is the Lord's Day different from an Old Covenant Sabbath of rules and rest?

Question 6

Student Question:

It is possible to attend worship while remaining a passive spectator, present in body but disengaged in heart. When you gather with the church, are you actively worshiping God, or mostly watching and waiting for it to end? What is one way you could prepare your heart and engage more fully in worship this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses past mere attendance to the heart's engagement in worship. It is entirely possible to be present in the assembly while absent in spirit, going through familiar motions, watching the clock, letting the mind wander to the week ahead. The aim of this question is to help students examine whether they are truly worshiping when they gather, or merely spectating.

Help students see the difference. A spectator evaluates the service: whether the singing was to his taste, whether the sermon held her interest, whether it ran long. A worshiper comes to give honor to God and to meet with Him: singing to the Lord and not merely listening, praying along rather than drifting, eating at the Lord's table with genuine remembrance, receiving the word as

God's word. The same hour can be empty spectating or rich worship, depending largely on the heart we bring to it.

Move toward preparation and engagement. Much of the difference is made before we arrive. Coming rested, prayerful, and expectant, having dealt with sin and distraction, changes everything. Ask each student whether they tend to worship or to spectate, and one concrete way they will prepare their heart and engage more fully this week, perhaps arriving unhurried, praying beforehand, singing with deliberate attention, or coming to the Lord's table with focused remembrance. The goal is to meet God in worship, not merely to attend an event.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The difference between attending worship and truly worshipping
- Spectating (evaluating the service) versus worshipping (honoring and meeting God)
- The heart we bring shaping whether the same hour is empty or rich
- Preparation before the assembly as key to engaged worship

Discussion Prompts

- When you gather, are you actively worshipping or mostly spectating?
- What tends to disengage your heart during worship?
- What is one way you will prepare and engage more fully this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

The writer tells us to “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” and to keep “encouraging one another” (vv. 24–25). What does it mean that we gather not only to receive but to build up one another, and why does God place this responsibility on every member, not just the leaders?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question draws out the horizontal purpose of the gathering: we assemble not only to receive from God but to build up one another. The writer says, “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,” and, do not neglect meeting together, “but encouraging one another.” The teacher should help students see that mutual ministry is a central reason God gathers His people, not a peripheral nicety.

Unpack the striking phrase “consider how to stir up one another.” The word translated “consider” means to think carefully, to give thought and attention. We are to come to the assembly having actually considered how to provoke, spur, and stimulate fellow believers toward love and good works. This makes encouragement an active, intentional ministry rather

than a happy accident. And it is aimed at action: not merely making people feel good, but stirring them toward love and good works they might not otherwise pursue.

Stress that this responsibility belongs to every member. The New Testament is full of “one another” commands, love one another, encourage one another, bear one another’s burdens, teach and admonish one another, and they are addressed to the whole church, not only to its leaders. Each believer is both a receiver and a giver in the body. A congregation is not a stage with a few performers and many spectators; it is a body in which every member has something to contribute to the warmth and growth of the whole.

Bring it home. If even one member comes intending to stir up and encourage others, lives are strengthened. If most come only to receive, the body grows cold. The teacher can help students reimagine their arrival at the assembly: not merely walking in to be fed, but coming as a minister of encouragement, considering on the way how they might spur a brother or sister toward love and good works.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The assembly as a place to build up one another, not only to receive
- “Consider how to stir up” as intentional, thoughtful encouragement
- Encouragement aimed at love and good works, not mere good feelings
- The “one another” ministry as the responsibility of every member, not just leaders

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to gather in order to build up others, not only to be fed?
- Why does God place the work of encouragement on every member?
- How would the church change if more came intending to stir others up?

Question 8

Student Question:

Most of us come to the assembly thinking about what we will get, rarely about what we will give. Who in your congregation could you intentionally encourage or “stir up to love and good works”? What is one specific way you could come to the gathering this week ready to build others up rather than only to be fed?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the ministry of encouragement into a personal assignment. Most of us, if honest, come to the assembly focused on what we will receive, rarely considering what we might give. The writer calls us to the opposite posture: to come having considered how to stir up specific people toward love and good works. The aim of this question is to move students from receivers to givers.

Help students get specific about people. Encouragement in the abstract changes no one; it is particular people who need particular encouragement. Invite students to think of actual names: the discouraged member who has been struggling, the newcomer who feels out of place, the weary servant who labors unnoticed, the wavering brother whose grip is loosening, the young believer who needs an example. Considering how to stir up one another begins with considering who.

Move toward one concrete act. Encouragement need not be elaborate: a sincere word, a note, a question asked and truly listened to, an invitation, a specific affirmation of someone's service, a gentle challenge toward a good work. Ask each student to name one person they will intentionally encourage or stir up this week, and how, and to come to the next gathering ready to give and not only to receive. Over time, this is how a body grows warm and strong.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Moving from a receiving posture to a giving one in the body
- Encouragement directed at specific people, not encouragement in general
- Simple, concrete acts of stirring up and building up
- Coming to the assembly ready to give, not only to be fed

Discussion Prompts

- Who in your congregation could you intentionally encourage this week?
- What specific way could you stir that person up to love and good works?
- How would coming ready to give, not only receive, change your experience of the assembly?

Question 9

Student Question:

The writer urges us to meet and encourage one another "all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (v. 25), and the verses that follow warn solemnly against drifting away from the faith (Hebrews 10:26–31; 3:12–13). Why does neglecting the assembly endanger our perseverance, how does faithful gathering help guard us against falling away, and what is the "Day" that should make all of this more urgent, not less?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the weightiest question of the lesson, and it sets the gathering of God's people in its most serious light. The writer does not merely suggest that meeting together is beneficial; he warns us to keep doing it "all the more as you see the Day drawing near," and the verses immediately following sound one of the most solemn warnings in all of Scripture against deliberately turning away from Christ (Hebrews 10:26–31). Neglecting the assembly is not a small matter, because it is bound up with the danger of drifting from the faith altogether.

Show the connection between forsaking the assembly and falling away. Earlier the same letter warns, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God,” and then gives the remedy: “exhort one another every day ... that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12–13). Sin is deceitful; it hardens us slowly, and we are poor judges of our own drift. The daily, regular encouragement of other believers is precisely how God guards us against that hardening. To withdraw from the assembly is to cut ourselves off from one of God’s chief means of keeping us faithful. The coal pulled from the fire grows cold not all at once, but surely. This is why the writer treats neglecting to meet together so gravely: it is often the first visible step in a longer drift away from Christ.

Handle the doctrine of perseverance honestly and carefully, as this passage demands. Hebrews plainly assumes that a true believer can fall away and be lost; that is the whole point of its warnings (Hebrews 3:12–14; 6:4–6; 10:26–31). Salvation is not a possession we can presume upon while drifting; it is preserved as we continue in faith and keep holding fast. This is not a counsel of fear or uncertainty for the faithful, for the God who promised is faithful and able to keep all who keep coming to Him. But it is a sober reminder that the assembly, worship, and mutual encouragement are not optional extras for people whose salvation is automatically secure no matter how they live. They are God-given means of perseverance, to be used “all the more” as the end approaches.

Explain the “Day” that makes all of this urgent. The Day is the day of the Lord’s return and judgment, the day toward which all history is moving. The writer says we should see it “drawing near.” Far from making the assembly less important, the nearness of that Day makes faithful gathering, worship, and encouragement more urgent, because the time to hold fast and to help one another hold fast is now, while it is still called today. The teacher should let this lift the students’ eyes: we do not gather merely out of habit or duty, but as people preparing to meet our Lord, helping one another arrive at that Day still holding fast.

Bring it home with both seriousness and hope. The seriousness: drifting from the assembly endangers the soul, and we dare not treat it lightly in ourselves or in those we love. The hope: God has given us the fire of the gathered church precisely to keep us burning to the end, and the One who promised is faithful. The teacher can urge students both to guard their own faithful gathering and to go after the cooling coals, the brothers and sisters who have begun to drift, before the drift becomes a fall.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Neglecting the assembly as bound up with the danger of drifting from Christ (Hebrews 10:25–31)
- The deceitfulness of sin and our poor judgment of our own drift (Hebrews 3:12–13)
- Mutual encouragement as God’s means of guarding us against hardening

- The biblical teaching that a believer can fall away and must persevere (Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26–31)
- Salvation preserved through continuing in faith, not presumed while drifting
- The “Day” as Christ’s return and judgment, making faithful gathering more urgent
- Going after fellow believers who have begun to drift

Discussion Prompts

- Why does neglecting the assembly endanger our perseverance in the faith?
- How does faithful gathering and encouragement help guard us against falling away?
- How should the nearness of the Day change the way we treat worship and assembly?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across these verses. You have been called to hold fast your hope, to gather faithfully for worship, to engage your heart, and to stir up and encourage one another as the Day approaches. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through this passage. What is the single truth about worship, assembly, and encouragement that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question asks students to gather the whole passage and name one specific way Christ is forming them. Resist letting answers stay general. Press gently for the concrete: which truth, changing what, beginning when.

It helps to retrace the movement. The writer called us to hold fast our confession because God is faithful, to gather faithfully rather than drift, to worship according to the pattern God has given, to engage our hearts rather than merely attend, to stir up and encourage one another, and to do all of this more earnestly as the Day approaches. Invite each student to ask which of these truths their heart most needs this week.

Close by reminding students that the goal is transformation, not merely information. This passage is meant to change how we treat the assembly, how we worship, and how we care for one another. Encourage each one to leave with a single truth to carry, return to, and pray over until the next gathering, and to come back to the fire ready to hold fast and to help others do the same.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Scripture aimed at transformation, not merely information
- A renewed commitment to faithful, engaged gathering and worship
- Personal responsibility for encouraging the body

- Living and gathering in light of the approaching Day

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth about worship and assembly does your heart most need this week, and why?
- What would it look like, concretely, to live in light of that truth?
- How can this group pray for and encourage you in that one step?