

Rooted: Core Truths

Week 7: Worship, Assembly, and Encouragement -- Hebrews 10:23–25

Take a single glowing coal out of a fire and set it by itself on the hearth. For a moment it burns just as brightly as before. But watch it. Alone, away from the other coals, it slowly dims, grays over, and goes cold. Put it back among the others and it flares to life again. The writer to the Hebrews understood something like this about the people of God. He was writing to Christians who were tired and under pressure, some of whom had started slipping away from the gathered church, a Sunday missed here, then there, until it became, he says, a habit with them. They were not necessarily denying the faith. They were just drifting, one coal at a time being pulled from the fire, quietly going cold.

So he gives them three short, urgent commands, all beginning with “let us.” Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, because the God who promised is faithful. Let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works. And let us not neglect to meet together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another, all the more as we see the Day drawing near. Notice that all three belong together. Holding fast, stirring up, and meeting together are not three separate ideas; they are one way of life. We hold onto our hope by gathering with God’s people, worshiping together, and spurring one another on. The assembly is not an optional extra for the especially religious. It is one of the chief ways God keeps His people faithful to the end.

Our age makes drifting easy. We are busy and tired. A screen can deliver a sermon to the couch. The voice in the culture, and sometimes in our own heads, whispers that faith is a private thing, that we can be spiritual on our own, that the gathered church is nice but not necessary. The letter to the Hebrews will not let that stand. Faith was never meant to be a solo project. We were made to gather, to worship the living God together, to confess our hope out loud in one another’s hearing, and to keep each other warm until the Day comes. The Christian who tries to go it alone is the coal cooling on the hearth.

That is where this week takes us, into the worship and the warmth of the gathered people of God. Read these verses slowly. Let the writer to the Hebrews stir you up, and ask whether you have been a faithful coal in the fire or one quietly cooling at the edge, and what it would look like to draw near again.

Group Discussion: More and more people today say they can be spiritual on their own and that gathering with the church is optional, especially when a sermon is only a screen away. Why do you think the gathered assembly has come to seem unnecessary to so many, and what does the writer to the Hebrews mean when he warns against “neglecting to meet together” and calls us to encourage one another “all the more as you see the Day drawing near”?

Personal Reflection: Be honest about your own relationship to the assembly of God's people. Has gathering for worship become a settled priority, a fading habit, or something you fit in when nothing else competes for the time? Where do you sense God calling you to take the assembly, and your part in it, more seriously?

Read Hebrews 10:23–25

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?

9. 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?
10. 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?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 2:42, the church devoted to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer; Acts 20:7, the disciples gathering on the first day of the week to break bread; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2, setting aside a gift on the first day of every week; Colossians 3:16, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; Hebrews 3:12–13, exhorting one another every day so no one is hardened by sin