



# Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

**Building a Healthy Church**

**Encourage One Another**

**Hebrews 10:23-25**

**02/03/2019**

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## Main Point

God drives us to encourage those around us.

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## Introduction

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

**Who is the most encouraging person you know? How has he or she encouraged you lately?**

**We often think about people only needing encouragement when they are down, but how can we benefit from encouragement when things are going well?**

When Christians identify with and commit to the church, they find a source of love, encouragement, and accountability. But these benefits are not only for when things are falling apart. On the contrary, such bonds are what hold the community of faith together and keep it

properly functioning. God has designed the unique encouragement of Christian community to help and sustain us in all of life.

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## Understanding

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

**> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 10:23-25.**

**The opening verses of this section speak of benefits we have been given in Jesus. What commands arise out of having confidence to enter God's presence through the blood of Jesus (vv. 23-24)? Where do you see these commands at work in your Christian community?**

**If we took these "let us" commands seriously, what would change in our lives?**

When we recognize that Jesus shed His blood to restore us to a right relationship with the Father, we will draw near to God (v. 21). This drawing near transforms our relationships with one another. Together we "hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering" (v. 23), and become "concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works (v. 24). Trusting in Christ's sacrifice on the cross enables us to draw near to God because, through His death and resurrection, Jesus has cleansed us of all our sin. Christ's sacrifice demonstrates the manner in which we are to encourage and serve one another, as Jesus set aside the glory due Him in order to meet our deepest needs.

**How might participating faithfully in the community help you more clearly see the areas in your life that need to grow or change?**

The writer of Hebrews says, "let us . . ." in each of the three commands that he gives in verses 22-24. This tells us something important about how God intends for us to mature. God saves

each of us individually, but He also calls us to grow in community. Our sin nature keeps us from having an accurate view of ourselves; yet when we commit to biblical community, we surround ourselves with people who can help us begin to see ourselves the way God sees us. Community is a gift from God that He intends to leverage to help us seek Him, remain firm in Him, and help others seek Him, too.

**What does it look like practically to “promote love and good works” (vv. 24-25)? Why do we need encouragement from others to do this?**

**What are some practical ways that we might demonstrate generosity in the way we live in community with one another?**

The writer of Hebrews gives us two ways we might spur each other on to love and good deeds. First, we must not neglect to meet together. Secondly, we must actively encourage one another. In other words, fellowship with believers requires faithful commitment. If we hope to cultivate spiritually edifying relationships with each other we must take the time necessary to build those relationships so that we might learn how to encourage, pray for, and hold each other accountable.

**Why did the writer of Hebrews remind his readers that “the Day” is “drawing near” (v. 25)?**

**What is taking place in our world today that causes us to take this seriously? How is community an encouragement and shelter from the world?**

The “Day” that is drawing near is the return of Christ, which is the foundation of all Christian hope. Together we should long to see that day come, and when it comes we want to be found working diligently with our hand to the plow (Luke 9:62). Much about our world and our culture is uncertain, but we have a firm and unshakable hope that Jesus will return and fully redeem a people for Himself. We experience a shadow of that community in the fellowship of believers in the church.

# Application

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

**Identify one person that you can encourage this week. In what ways will you encourage him or her?**

**What distinct ways have you been encouraged by walking through life with the people in this group? How can we make this a more regular aspect of our time together?**

**If we are making encouragement and concern for one another a regular part of our time together, what impact might that have on people looking in from the outside? How can our community of believers be missional before we even look outward?**

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## Pray

Thank God for the grace and encouragement that you find in the community of faith. Pray that He would strengthen and sustain your fellowship and make you a people who are devoted to encouraging one another in the good and the bad.

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## Commentary

### HEBREWS 10:23-25

10:23. This 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.

10:24-25. This 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. 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.

### HEBREWS 10:21-25

#### Christ's Sacrifice Opens the Way to God (Heb. 10:19-39)

No Old Covenant worshiper would have been bold enough to try to enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle. Even the high priest entered the holy of holies only once a year. The thick veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies was a barrier between people and God. Only the death of Christ could tear that veil (Mark 15:38) and open the way into the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells.

**A gracious invitation (vv. 19-25).** "Let us draw near ... Let us hold fast ... Let us consider one another." This threefold invitation hinges on our boldness to enter into the holiest. And this boldness ("freedom of speech") rests on the finished work of the Saviour. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest could not enter the holy of holies unless he had the blood of the sacrifice (Heb. 9:7). But our entrance into God's presence is not because of an animal's blood, but because of Christ's shed blood.

This open way into God's presence is "new" (recent, fresh) and not a part of the Old Covenant that "waxeth [grows] old [and] is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). It is "living" because Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for us (Heb. 7:25). Christ is the new and living way! We come to God through Him, our High Priest over the house of God (the church, see Heb. 3:6). When His flesh was torn on the cross, and His life sacrificed, God tore the veil in the temple. This symbolized the new and living way now opened for all who believe.

On the basis of these assurances—that we have boldness to enter because we have a living High Priest—we have an “open invitation” to enter the presence of God. The Old Covenant high priest visited the holy of holies once a year, but we are invited to dwell in the presence of God every moment of each day. What a tremendous privilege! Consider what is involved in this threefold invitation.

**Let us draw near (v. 22).** Of course, we must prepare ourselves spiritually to fellowship with God. The Old Testament priest had to go through various washings and the applying of blood on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). Also, during the regular daily ministry, the priests had to wash at the laver before they entered the holy place (Ex. 30:18–21). The New Testament Christian must come to God with a pure heart and a clean conscience. Fellowship with God demands purity (1 John 1:5–2:2).

**Let us hold fast (v. 23).** The readers of this epistle were being tempted to forsake their confession of Jesus Christ by going back to the Old Covenant worship. The writer did not exhort them to hold on to their salvation, because their security was in Christ and not in themselves (Heb. 7:25). Rather, he invited them to hold fast “the profession [confession] of ... hope.” (There is no manuscript evidence for the word “faith.” The Greek word is “hope.”)

We have noted in our study of Hebrews that there is an emphasis on the glorious hope of the believer. God is “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10). Believers are “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1) and therefore can rejoice in hope (Heb. 3:6). Hope is one of the main themes of Hebrews 6 (vv. 11–12, 18–20). We are looking for Christ to return (Heb. 9:28) and we are seeking that city that is yet to come (Heb. 13:14).

When a believer has his hope fixed on Christ, and relies on the faithfulness of God, then he will not waver. Instead of looking back (as the Jews so often did), we should look ahead to the coming of the Lord.

Let us consider one another (vv. 24–25). Fellowship with God must never become selfish. We must also fellowship with other Christians in the local assembly. Apparently, some of the wavering believers had been absenting themselves from the church fellowship. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a believer gets from the assembly, but rather on what he can contribute to the assembly. Faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works. One of the strong motives for faithfulness is the soon coming of Jesus Christ. In fact, the only other place the word translated “assembling” (Heb. 10:25) is used in the New Testament is in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, where it’s translated “gathering” and deals with the coming of Christ.

The three great Christian virtues are evidenced here: faith (Heb. 10:22), hope (Heb. 10:23), and love (Heb. 10:24). They are the fruit of our fellowship with God in His heavenly sanctuary.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 314–315.