

Chapter Nine:

Faithfulness

and

Fellowship

Last Revised: 3/30/2011

Scripture Memory:

Hebrews 10:24-25

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

Review:

The Wheel

Illustration

II Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 2:20

II Timothy 3:16

Joshua 1:8

The Word Hand

John 15:7

Philippians 4:6 & 7

The Prayer Hand

Philippians 2:1 & 2

The Fellowship Tree and the Scales of Community

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and joy shall reign through all eternity.

AMEN

John Fawcett

FAITHFULNESS AND FELLOWSHIP

Heb 10:24-25

24 *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,*

25 *not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

I. *and let us consider*

A. Corporate responsibility

1. Who is held responsible in this verse?
2. Is it addressed to only the most faithful 20% of church membership who traditionally carry the load?
3. In many churches, on the average on any given Sunday 50% of the membership are in Worship Service, 50% of those in Worship Service stay for Bible study or Sunday School classes and 50% of those in Bible study attend midweek services. Of these groups to whom is this verse speaking?

Strong's: CONSIDER
2657 katanoeo (kat-an-o-eh'-o);
from 2596 and 3539; to observe fully:
KJV-- behold, consider, discover, perceive.

CONSIDER

5. katanoeo ^2657^, "to perceive clearly" (kata, intensive, and No. 4), "to understand fully, consider closely," is used of not "considering" thoroughly the beam in one's own eye, <Matt. 7:3> and <Luke 6:41> (KJV, "perceivest"); of carefully "considering" the ravens, <Luke 12:24>; the lilies, <v. 27>; of Peter's full "consideration" of his vision, <Acts 11:6>; of Abraham's careful "consideration" of his own body, and Sarah's womb, as dead, and yet accepting by faith God's promise, <Rom. 4:19> (RV); of "considering" fully the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, <Heb. 3:1>; of thoughtfully "considering" one another to provoke unto love and good works, <Heb. 10:24>. It is translated by the verbs "behold," <Acts 7:31-32; Jas. 1:23-24>; "perceive," <Luke 20:23>; "discover," <Acts 27:39>. See BEHOLD, DISCOVER, PERCEIVE.#
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B. Corporate consideration

1. Many of us are very deliberate about our finances, we think about them, we work on them and we evaluate them on a regular basis. Many parents spend time considering the academic progress of their children, they discuss and deliberate over this in detail as they consider how best to help their children. Others have an exercise program which they approach with the same deliberation and care. Much consideration and thought is given both to the routine and the consistency as they consider at length how to best use the time allotted. There are even some who have hobbies or sports which they discuss and deliberate over. Students carefully consider their courses, their course selection and track their

progress towards graduation. Few however give even a fraction of the time spent in the above endeavors considering how to make the best use of their fellowship times in terms of motivating and stimulating others. It would be asking enough for careful consideration, deliberation in terms of deriving the best benefit for themselves from fellowship but this passage speaks in terms of careful consideration and deliberation in terms of our ministry to others in fellowship.

2. In the project below, rank the following activities in terms of the relative amount of time you give in a given week to consideration of the event.

Studies _____

Sports or hobbies _____

Exercise program _____

Finances _____

Work _____

Stimulating others to love and good works during fellowship _____

3. As a general rule, do you approach fellowship as a ministry that you are serving in or a ministry others perform in order to serve you?

4. In evaluating your answer to question number three (3), think through on the last church fellowship or ministry fellowship you attended. How much work did you put into it? Were you happy with this arrangement?

5. Does this attitude conform with the expectation of the Word of God?

6. As you reflect on how you consider fellowship, do your considerations revolve around the fellowship meeting your needs or your ability to meet needs within the fellowship?

7. If a church were to mount an advertising campaign to attract members with the same expectations and motivations as yours would they emphasize the opportunity for you to work, to serve and to motivate others (“Come Join Us In This Great Opportunity To Motivate Others”) or would they emphasize how they would serve and motivate you (Come Join Us and Be Motivated To New Heights of Love)?

8. How do your expectations for fellowship compare with God's expectations for you and the fellowship you join?

C. Shaping this consideration

1. In choosing fellowships, most consider heavily their personal reaction to the corporate body rather than the Biblical consideration. The thought being, "I know this is not best for me, but I can handle it" and then go on to make the decision based on the desires of the extended family (parents or other relatives), their job, the relative ease of the commute to and from the facilities used, the facilities themselves, peripheral programs or other such considerations. Deliberate and careful deliberation should be given though, not only on the leadership of the church but the membership as well.
2. In the following verse, what will be the impact of bad company on your family? - 1 Cor 15:33 "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals."
3. Does this passage give any leeway for our personal feelings on this issue. Most will respond, well, that may be true for others, but it won't happen to me. How does the opening statement of I Corinthians 15:33 address this?
4. For the Holy Spirit to place this clause in the Bible where it will be read over a period of thousands of years, what must be true about man's tendencies in the area of his choosing the company he keeps?
5. In the area of fellowship, does good win over bad or bad win over good?
6. Why is it important to put the Biblical qualifications of fellowship above extended family, work, distance, career, facilities and all the other peripheral considerations that generally go into this decision?
7. What about the importance in your consideration of fellowship with non-Christians. When we consider what it means to keep "bad

company” we are not left to simple consideration of the median levels of behavior as it pertains to a social group such as an office or club, nor are we left to consider the median level of behavior of the society in which we live, rather the Word of God defines what “bad company” entails. Consider Ephesians 2:1 - 3, if this is true, can there be “good company” with non-Christians?

Eph 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

8. Our consideration for fellowship should be the mutual stimulation to love and good works. Our consideration for non-Christians should be their salvation, our consideration for carnal Christians should be their maturity. A general rule of thumb can then be followed in our considerations...
 - a. Fellowship – Descends I Corinthians 15:33
 - b. Ministry – Ascends Luke 7:40
 - c. As a result we should use the highest standards of doctrine and conduct as it pertains to our consideration of fellowship.

II. *...how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...*

A. Proactive relationships

1. Think back honestly about the last time you were in a position to make a decision concerning the fellowship you were going to join. As you considered your options, what was at the forefront of your considerations, how the fellowship met your needs or the opportunities within the fellowship for you to meet the needs of others?

Strong's: STIMULATE

3948 paroxusmos (par-ox-oos-mos'); from 3947 ("paroxysm"); incitement (to good), or dispute (in anger): KJV-- contention, provoke unto.

PROVOCATION, PROVOKE

2. paroxusmos ^3948^ denotes "a stimulation" (Eng., "paroxysm"), (cf. B, No. 2): in <Heb. 10:24>, "to provoke," lit., "unto a stimulation (of love)." See CONTENTION #2,

CONTENTION, CONTENTIOUS

2. paroxusmos ^3948^, (Eng., "paroxysm"), lit., "a sharpening," hence "a sharpening of the feeling, or action" (para, "beside," intensive, oxus, "sharp"), denotes an incitement, a sharp contention, <Acts 15:39>, the effect of irritation; elsewhere in <Heb. 10:24>, "provoke," unto love. See PROVOKE.#

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2. If someone in the fellowship to which you belong became interested in how to stimulate you to greater love and good works, would you consider him pushy and intrusive or obedient and faithful to the Word of God?

3. How do the following verses speak to our responsibility to stimulate others to love and good deeds?

Deut 3:28

28 'But charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he shall give them as an inheritance the land which you will see.'

Judges 20:22

22 But the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and arrayed for battle again in the place where they had arrayed themselves the first day.

1 Sam 23:16-17

16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God.

17 Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."

2 Chr 35:1-2

1 Then Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover animals on the fourteenth day of the first month.

2 And he set the priests in their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD.

Isa 35:3-4

3 Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.

4 Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you."

Mark 10:45

45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Acts 11:23-24

23 Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord;

24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

Acts 15:30-33

30 So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

32 And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.

33 And after they had spent time there, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out.

2 Cor 4:5

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

Col 4:8

8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

1Thes 3:1-2

1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone;

2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,

1Thes 5:11

11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1Thes 5:14

14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

Titus 2:3-4

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,
4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

Heb 3:13

13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

4. How do the following individuals reveal this as a priority in their fellowship activities

Heb 12:12-13

12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,

13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

5. Reflect back on the preceding passages.

a. In the ministry of encouragement is it simply the ministers encouraging the flock?

b. Do you see any instances of the ministers or leaders being encouraged?

c. What are some ways you can participate in this ministry of encouragement?

- d. Do you think the leadership of the ministry to which God has called you receives more complaints or encouragements?
6. How do their priorities in terms of fellowship compare with your own? Do you come to encourage or to be encouraged?
 7. Can you impact others with your love while stimulating their love without reference to good works? Is this an exhortation concerning how you feel and how you make others feel or does it entail actions as well?

B. *“to love”*: Christ’s definition of Love

Strong’s: 26 agape (ag-ah'-pay);
from 25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast:
KJV-- (feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love.

LOVE (NOUN AND VERB)

agapao ²⁵ and the corresponding noun agape (B, No. 1 below) present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, <Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5>.

"Agape and agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, <John 17:26>; the human race, generally, <John 3:16; Rom. 5:8>, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly <John 14:21>; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, <John 13:34>, and toward all men, <1 Thes. 3:12; 1 Cor. 16:14; 2 Pet. 1:7>; (c) to express the essential nature of God, <1 John 4:8>.
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1. Read the following passages and then answer the questions below in the context of what the Word of God says about love...

John 14:15

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:21

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

John 14:23

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

John 14:24

24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

I Jn 3:18

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

I Jn 4:20-21

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

I Jn 5:1-3

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

- a. In Hebrews 10:24 & 25, is our approach to love and fellowship proactive or reactive?
- b. Is love primarily a feeling?

- c. Who defines whether or not we love? Do we define this or does God?

 - d. If we stimulate people to love, will we be impacting their emotions or their actions?

 - e. Is it possible to feel love without doing anything?

 - f. If a person attends a praise service and is moved to great depths of emotions, tears, shouts of joy, feelings of ecstasy and in the week to come does nothing different than the week before, was this person experiencing great love or great emotions?

 - g. What do you expect of your fellowship, that it make you feel like you love God or that it provide you with opportunities to love God?

 - h. According to Jesus' definition of what it means to love God, if we stimulate people to love God, what will we be stimulating them to do?
2. How will true motivation in love result in good deeds or works?

C. “and good deeds”

Strong's: DEEDS

2041 ergon (er'-gon);

from a primary (but obsolete) ergo (to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication, an act:

KJV-- deed, doing, labour, work.

DEED, DEEDS

1. ergon ^2041^ denotes "a work" (Eng., "work" is etymologically akin), "deed, act." When used in the sense of a "deed or act," the idea of "working" is stressed, e. g., <Rom. 15:18>; it frequently occurs in an ethical sense of human actions, good or bad, e. g., <Matt. 23:3; 26:10; John 3:20-21; Rom. 2:7,15; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Thes. 1:11>, etc.; sometimes in a less concrete sense, e. g., <Titus 1:16; Jas. 1:25> (RV that worketh, lit., of work). See LABOR, WORK.

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1. How would you respond if you went to a “fellowship” and the individuals in the fellowship seemed preoccupied with you being excited about obedience and good deeds?

2. If there was a member of your fellowship, who, when he met you, continually asked you about evangelism and seemed preoccupied in how you were doing on a week to week basis, how would you respond?

3. Many in addition to “fellowship” want an accountability partner to stimulate them to love and good deeds. What they really want is biblical fellowship.

4. Rather than thinking critically of others in the fellowship you attend, use these questions to evaluate yourself and your actions.
 - a. Do you appreciate it when others practice biblical fellowship?

 - b. Have you chosen a fellowship based on biblical standards or your own needs?

 - c. In the fellowships you attend is there a balance between others expressing their obedience through serving you and you expressing your obedience through serving others?

III. “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some”

Strong's: FORSAKING

1459 egkatalaipo (eng-kat-al-i'-po);

from 1722 and 2641; to leave behind in some place, i.e. (in a good sense) let remain over, or (in a bad sense) to desert:

KJV-- forsake, leave.

FORSAKE

2. enkataleipo ^1459^, from en, "in," and No. 1, denotes (a) "to leave behind, among, leave surviving," <Rom. 9:29>; (b) "to forsake, abandon, leave in straits, or helpless," said by, or of, Christ, <Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; Acts 2:27,31> (No. 1 in some mss.); of men, <2 Cor. 4:9; 2 Tim. 4:10,16>; by God, <Heb. 13:5>; of things, by Christians (negatively), <Heb. 10:25>. See LEAVE.#

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LEAVE, LEFT

5. enkataleipo ^1459^, lit., "to leave behind in" (en, "in," and No. 3), signifies (a) "to leave behind," <Rom. 9:29>, "a seed"; (b) "to abandon, forsake," translated by the verb "to leave" in <Acts 2:27,31> (in some mss., No. 3) of the soul of Christ; in the following, by the verb "to forsake," <Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; 2 Cor. 4:9; 2 Tim. 4:10,16; Heb. 10:25; 13:5> (see No. 2 in the same v.). See FORSAKE.#

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A. What do we consider when it comes to “not forsaking”?

1. One frequent question is that of “keeping the Sabbath”. Read Exodus 20:8 – 11 and then answer the questions.

Exodus 20:8-11

8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

a. What day of the week is the Sabbath?

b. What day of the week do you attend church?

c. Is this the “Sabbath”?

- d. Many Christians are so used to attending church on Sunday and reading the injunctions concerning the Sabbath, that they have come to regard Sunday as the last day of the week, the seventh day, the Sabbath day of the Bible rather than what it really is, the first day of the week. Contributing to this is the tradition in many countries of giving workers both Saturday and Sunday off. Thus Sunday, in terms of planning the week “feels” like the last day, when in fact, on the calendar you have turned the corner so to speak and Sunday is the first day of the week.

(Hebrews 10:25) The word “forsaking” is the translation of *egkatalaipo* which means “to let down, to abandon.” “Assembling” is the translation of *episunagoge*. The word is a compound of *ago* “to go”, *sun* “with” and *epi*. *Sun* and *ago* come over into English in the word “synagogue,” the meeting place of the Jews other than the temple at Jerusalem. Alford suggest two reason for the addition of *epi*. It was used by the writer to take away the Judaistic sound of *sunagoge*. Or, it might point to the individual meeting places of various assemblies. Some of the recipients of this letter were, under stress of persecution, absenting themselves from the Christian assemblies. They are exhorted not to *egkatalaipo*, that is, let down in their attendance upon these meetings, or abandon them. They are, on the other hand to exhort each other to continued attendance, and in view of the fact of the approach of the time when the lord would come. Translation: “*Not letting down on the assembling of ourselves together, even as the custom of certain is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing near.*”

Wuest; Word Studies in the Greek New Testament; Vol. II; page 182; Eedmans; 1970

2. Are we as Christians required to keep the “Sabbath rest” of the Old Covenant?
- a. Many aspects of the Old Covenant Law were fulfilled in Christ. We no longer have a temple, we no longer have animal sacrifices, we no longer have a priestly class, we no longer celebrate new moons or Old Covenant festivals. The New Covenant is our guide to what continues and what does not. How do each of the following passages speak to the keeping of the Sabbath by Christians.

Col 2:16-17

16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--

17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Gal 4:9-10

9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

Rom 14:4-6

4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

b. According to the above passages, is it wrong...

1.) To worship on the Sabbath

2.) To worship on Sunday

3.) To have a mid week service

4.) To not have a mid week service

5.) To require everyone to worship on the Sabbath

6.) To require everyone to have a midweek service

c. Christians worship traditionally on the first day of the week because this was the day Christ rose from the dead and because this was the example laid down by the early church in the book of Acts.

Mark 16:9

9 [Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

Acts 20:7

7 And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

- d. Does the Word of God here command the observance of the Worship service on the first day of the week or does the Word of God present it as an example? If a Christian lives in a country where Thursday was given as the national day off for all workers, would he be in sin for worshipping on Thursday rather than Sunday.
- e. If this is not the case and the Christian lives in a country where there is relative freedom and churches follow this model meeting on Sunday. Is the Christian free from worshipping on Sunday if this is the tradition of the church which he belongs?
- f. For your personal considerations of this issue: Calendars are cyclical in nature and have changed many times over the years. Do we in fact know that the day on our present calendar designated as Saturday is in fact the original Saturday given to Moses as the Sabbath? Has God committed Himself to divinely watch over the creation of calendars over the years as He has the Word of God? Those who wish to keep the law are faced with a number of problems. First, who will build the new Temple. The directions given in the Law require divine enablement of the builders. Second: who will administer as priests, all the genealogical records of the Jews have been lost, no one knows who is of the tribe of Levi. Third, what day is the Sabbath. Calendars have come and gone over the years. We have no confidence that the weekly cycle we now hold to, on which Saturday falls, is the same cycle that Moses held to. We have no confidence that at the time of Christ, the corruptions of the Law and priesthood had not extended to the calendar year as well.
- g. Does the fact that some Christians confuse the Sabbath commandments in the Old Covenant for Sunday Worship in the New Covenant free the disciple from his responsibilities to be faithful in worship and service in a local congregation?

B. A lifestyle

1. Does this passage say that you can never, for any reason, miss a church service?
2. What is the standard given in this passage?

3. What is criticized in this passage?
4. How often are you expected to be at work?
5. How many sick days, holidays, vacation days are you given?
6. Would it be considered neglectful of your work schedule to take your vacation days or your sick days?
7. What would be considered neglectful of your work schedule?
8. To apply this passage to our lives we must first recognize the assemblies which our church has. In your church, what are the regular assemblies?
9. What would be considered being faithful to these assemblies?
10. What would be considered neglectful?
11. Because a specific schedule and definition is not given, does that mean that no one can speak to us on this issue and that whatever we feel good about that is the definition of “not forsaking our own assembling together”?

C. This lifestyle is not universal

1. From this passage, will faithfulness in a fellowship be a universal trait?
2. What phrase in this passage teaches us that there will always be a segment of Christian fellowship which is habitually neglectful?
3. Does this reality excuse us from our responsibility to Christian fellowship?
4. Often growing Christians are caught by surprise when they learn that there is a segment of the church which has very low level of commitment not only to service in the church but to fellowship as a whole. How do the following passages speak to the reality of this dual nature of the world as a whole and the church in specific?

Matt 7:13-14

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.

14 "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

(NAS)

Matt 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

(NAS)

Matt 13:37-43

37 And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has

(NAS)

5. Should we, as Christians, be surprised when not all share the same zeal as we do in the area of fellowship?
6. Is our zeal and commitment in fellowship based on the norm of those around us or the Word of God?
7. If our commitment to fellowship is based on the standards of man what will determine our actions?

8. If our commitment to fellowship is based on the Word of God, what will determine our actions?
9. From this passage, is faithfulness in a fellowship so subjective and arbitrary that we do not have to think about it as long as we feel good about our attendance?
10. What phrase in this passage teaches us that the definition of faithfulness in a fellowship is not left up to the individual?
11. What are some ways to evaluate ourselves in this area?

IV. but encouraging one another

Strong's: 3870 parakaleo (par-ak-al-eh'-o); from 3844 and 2564; to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): KJV-- beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray.

EXHORT, EXHORTATION

1. parakaleo ^3870^, primarily, "to call to a person" (para, "to the side," kaleo, "to call"), denotes (a) "to call on, entreat"; see BESEECH; (b) to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trial experienced), translated "exhort" in the RV of <Phil. 4:2; 1 Thes. 4:10; Heb. 13:19,22>, for KJV, "beseech"; in <1 Tim. 5:1>, for KJV, "intreat"; in <1 Thes. 5:11>, for KJV, "comfort"; "exhorted" in <2 Cor. 8:6> and <12:18>, for KJV, "desired"; in <1 Tim. 1:3>, for KJV, "besought. See BESEECH.
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
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- A. According to Hebrews 10:24 & 25, how are we to interact with one another in our fellowship?**
- B. Is it enough, in God's value system, just to show up?**
- C. In the modern day church, the pressure is placed upon the church, by man, to provide an environment which man finds suitable, otherwise he simply will not come.** For all intensive purposes, the clear teaching of God's Word and the fellowship of the saints is not enough. Edification has given way to entertainment. If most Christians were honest in their statements, instead of

saying, “That church was just not edifying” or “That church just did not meet my needs”, rather in all honesty they would say, “That church is just not as entertaining as I have come to demand.”

1. Is this God’s value system?

2. Is this your value system?

D. If you saw a byline for a church such as “The Encourager Church” would you assume it was...

1. a place you could go, roll up your sleeves and go to work encouraging others,
2. or would you expect to go there and be encouraged irrespective of your own personal involvement?

3. It was a real disappointment. In the local Christian bookstore I saw a box of cards entitled “Encouragement”. “Oh boy” I thought. This will be great. Cards I can send to guys in my ministry to motivate them and encourage them in the Word, in Prayer, in Evangelism and Christian Service. This will be great. When I got home and broke open the boxes, to my disappointment I found Sympathy cards. It is a commentary on the church as a whole. We do not think of “encouragement” as proactive, as motivating people to greater love and good works, to obedience, to pushing the envelope of Christian service, but rather as reactive and nurturing, that they might feel better. Don’t get me wrong. People often have hurts and needs and a Sympathy card is of great comfort. But where has the proactive encouraging of Hebrews 10:24 & 25 gone? To be honest, as mentioned before, this would often as not be seen as intrusive. In a market driven culture such as America, if people wanted this product it would be for sale. The simple truth is that at best it is not thought of and at worst it is resented and not wanted.

V. *and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

Strongs's: **DAY** - 2250 hemera (hay-mer'-ah); feminine (with 5610 implied) of a derivative of hemai (to sit; akin to the base of 1476) meaning tame, i.e. gentle; day, i.e. (literally) the time space between dawn and dark, or the whole 24 hours (but several days were usually reckoned by the Jews as inclusive of the parts of both extremes); figuratively, a period (always defined more or less clearly by the context):
KJV-- age, + alway, (mid-) day (by day, [-ly]), + for ever, judgment, (day) time, while, years.

“The day drawing near” (*eggizousan ten hemeran*). The Second Coming of Christ which draws nearer all the time (Romans 13:12). Word Pictures in the New Testament; Robertson; Vol. V page 412; Baker; 1932

“Ye see the day approaching” (*eggizousan ten hemeran*). The day of Christ's second coming, bringing with it the judgment of Israel. Word Pictures in the New Testament; Vincent; Vol. IV page 508; Eerdmans; 1977

DAY

The 24-hour period between two successive risings of the sun. The Hebrew people reckoned their day from evening to evening, the period of time between two successive sunsets <Gen. 1:5,8; Ex. 12:18; Lev. 23:32>.

The Bible also uses the word day in a symbolic sense, as in "the day of His wrath" <Job 20:28>, and "the day of the Lord" <Is. 2:12; 13:6,9; Amos 5:18-20>. The same phrase is used in the New Testament <1 Thes. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10>, meaning "the day of the Lord Jesus" <1 Cor. 5:5>, or His second coming. To those who scoff at the delay of the Lord's return, Peter declared, "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" <2 Pet. 3:8>. Also see TIME.
(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)
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A. Personal responsibility “and all the more”

Strongs: **MORE**

3123 mallon (mal'-lon); neuter of the comparative of the same as 3122; (adverbially) more (in a greater degree)) or rather: KJV-- + better, X far, (the) more (and more), (so) much (the more), rather.

MORE

1. mallon ^3123^, the comparative degree of mala, "very, very much," is used (a) increase, "more," with qualifying words, with pollo, "much," e. g., <Mark 10:48>, "the more (a great deal)"; <Rom. 5:15,17>, "(much) more"; <Phil. 2:12> (ditto); with poso, "how much," e. g., <Luke 12:24; Rom. 11:12>; with tosouto, "by so much," <Heb. 10:25>; (b) without

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1. Whose responsibility is it to be active and faithful in fellowship?
2. Does this passage place the responsibility on church leadership to make sure the members come faithfully?
3. Does this passage place the responsibility on church leadership to make the church entertaining enough to keep the members coming?
4. Whose responsibility is it in this verse to maintain a faithful level of service in fellowship?

B. Living in light of the imminent return of Christ “Drawing near.”

“The second coming of Christ, along with the kingdom which follows it, is in fact, the very heart of the progress of Scripture and is the major theme of Old Testament Prophecy.” Chafer/Walvrod; Major Bible Themes; page 328; 1974

“The name ‘eschatology’ calls attention to the fact that the history of the world and of the human race will finally reach its consummation. It is not an indefinite and endless process, but a real history moving on to a divinely appointed end. According to Scripture that end will come as a mighty crisis, and the facts and events associated with the crises form the contents of eschatology. Systematic Theology; Berkhoff; Eerdmans; 1974; page 666

Strong's: NEAR; /Approaching

1448 eggizo (eng-id'-zo); from 1451; to make near, i.e. (reflexively) approach: KJV-- approach, be at hand, come (draw) near, be (come, draw) nigh.

Vines: APPROACH

A. Verb.

eggizo ^1448^, "to draw near, to approach," from engus, "near," is used (a) of place and position, literally and physically, <Matt. 21:1; Mark 11:1; Luke 12:33; 15:25>; figuratively, of drawing near to God, <Matt. 15:8; Heb. 7:19; Jas. 4:8>; (b) of time, with reference to things that are imminent, as the kingdom of heaven, <Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7>; the kingdom of God, <Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9,11>; the time of fruit, <Matt. 21:34>; the desolation of Jerusalem, <Luke 21:8>; redemption, <21:28>; the fulfillment of a promise, <Acts 7:17>; the Day of Christ in contrast to the present night of the world's spiritual darkness, <Rom. 13:12; Heb. 10:25>; the coming of the Lord, <Jas. 5:8>; the end of all things, <1 Pet. 4:7>. It is also said of one who was drawing near to death, <Phil. 2:30>. See COME, Note (16), DRAW, B, No. 1, HAND (at), NIGH.

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1. What is the motivation that God gives us for faithfulness in fellowship?
2. Is the motivation the exciting, dynamic and new nature of fellowship week after week?
3. Does God use the motivation that fellowship meets our needs and that we should be faithful so that needs will not go unmet?
4. Of these two motivations, which are you most likely to use for yourself or for others?

VI. *Application*

A. Breakdown the fellowship God has called you to under the following headings.

1. Who
2. Where
3. When
4. How
5. What

B. What were your considerations when it come joining the church you currently attend?

C. How does this motivation compare with the Biblical injunction of Hebrews 10:24 & 25?

D. How has this affected your membership?

E. What changes need to be made to bring you into line with Biblical Fellowship?

F. How does your faithfulness in fellowship compare with your faithfulness in other areas of life such as work or school?

G. What changes need to be made to bring you into line with Biblical Fellowship

H. What is your motivation for faithfulness in the church you attend?

I. How does this compare with the Biblical injunction of Hebrews 10:24 & 25?

J. What changes need to be made to bring you into line with Biblical Fellowship?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: The Scales of Fellowship

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: II Corinthians 9:2

How does this passage relate to the theme?

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:**

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Ephesians 4:29

How does this passage relate to the theme?

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:**

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Colossians 3:15 & 16

How does this passage relate to the theme?

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?
Explain why:**

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: The Scales of Fellowship

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Thessalonians 5:11 & 14

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Hebrews 3:13

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Isaiah 35:3

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?

Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?