

Fellowship **Hebrews 10:24-25**

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“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

There is a tendency in each of us to stray from the path, to grow cold in heart and spirit, to become enamored by those things that dampen our fervor and affection for Christ. One of the antidotes for error and apostasy is the loving concern of fellow believers.

Done in the right way, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, this can be a powerful means of helping each other stay on the right track. But there are problems. All too often if a brother comes to me and gives me a word of admonition, warning, or advice, my first tendency is to bristle.

I say to myself, “Who does he think he is? He's not perfect. What right does he have to talk to me like that?” So, for this vital Bible verse to be effective in our lives, the first thing we need is a spirit of humility.

The other problem of course, is on the opposite side of the coin. If I go to a brother with a prideful, overbearing attitude, giving the impression of a know-it-all, I am most likely to be resisted and rebuffed.

Therefore, humility (the queen of virtues) once again proves to be the central need for true Christian ministry, growth and fellowship. If a humble, loving person goes to another humble and loving person with a word of exhortation or advice, there will be eternal work done by the Holy Spirit of God.

But if a high-minded, haughty person goes to another high-minded, haughty individual with a word of exhortation or advice, the sparks will fly, the fellowship will be shattered, and the devil will have gained another victory. The person will not be provoked to love and good works, but to anger.

Frankly, I have found that a good example is one of the best and most effective means of prompting love and good works in others. Our words may provoke a retaliation, but our example is likely to challenge another to greater love and service for Christ.

It seems that even during the Apostles' times, there were those who neglected the fellowship of believers. They were failing to gather for the worship of God and the mutual edification that always results. So the writer encourages them to join heart and hand; to not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Our faith and obedience can be stimulated by fellowship with other believers, as theirs can by fellowship with us.

For some time I worked in a bakery. Often we would receive orders for chocolate donuts. I would take great chunks of chocolate and put them in a large pan. Then I would heat it gradually and soon the chunks of chocolate would begin to melt and merge with each other.

This is a picture of church fellowship. We can be like chunks of chocolate; all gathered together in the same church, but true fellowship begins when the Spirit of God warms our hearts and we become one.

Jesus prayed, “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21).

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