

Are We Assembled?

Hebrews 10:25 has been used by many to refer to the first day of the week assembly. However, nowhere does the text or context refer to the Lord's Day. The subjects of salvation in Christ and working together in the hope of eternity are prominent. Therefore, the discussion by the Hebrew writer can be applied to our current need to find new ways to communicate.

Hebrews 10:22-24 gives three exhortations.

“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” This is a reference to the consecration of the Levitical priests by the application of blood and the washing in water (Exodus 29). The Hebrew people would understand the analogy of purification from filth and the atonement of sin by blood. The blood of Christ and the waters of baptism sanctify us to serve as priests in the Kingdom of God, which is the church of Christ. As priests of God in Christ, the work we do is not in a temple but the world. We work where we are and under all circumstances.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” We may hope to meet again on Sunday, but the real hope is for a heavenly home when Christ returns for us (John 14:2-3). It is the same hope that Abraham looked to, *“for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God”* (Hebrews 11:10). Like Abraham, we confess our hope by doing what Christ tells us to do in the gospel. As He served others, we serve others. It seems like the present worldwide pandemic has caused many to find new ways to serve their brethren.

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” The ESV uses the words *“stir up one another,”* and the ASV uses *“provoke.”* All the translations lead us to ask, *“How can we encourage each other, help each other, and assist each other in our work for Christ in these trying times?”* The response to this question is answered in many ways by our brethren around the world. Some are using Skype and Zoom to conduct interactive bible classes for all ages. Sermons and classes are now streaming live and available on-demand, making them available to millions. Phone calls to check on each other, connect needs to supplies, and provide shopping for those now isolated at home, is a new way to “assemble” together.

“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” (Hebrews 10:25). As we distance ourselves to prevent the spread of a new virus, we do not forsake our brothers and sisters. Our prayers increase as we long to be together, to share the handshakes and hugs of fellowship, and to sing praises together. Until the current health threat is over, we will continue to do whatever we can, wherever we are, to help each other on our way to eternity. Could Paul say about us the things he said of the churches of Macedonia? *“Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God”* (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).