

Encourage One Another

24And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but **let us encourage one another** - - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV)

“It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion [Christianity] help each other in their wants. They spare nothing! Their first Legislator [or Leader, Jesus] put it into their heads that they are brothers and sisters.” (Lucian, non-Christian Greek writer in about 150 AD)

“It is our care for the helpless, our practice of loving kindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. ‘Look!’ they say, ‘how they love one another! Look how they are prepared to die for one another!’” (Tertullian, in about 200 AD)

The Greek word translated “encourage” here is the word *parakaleo*. It means “to come alongside someone to encourage or help them in whatever way they need help. The word Jesus called the Holy Spirit, whom He sent to be with us always was *parakletos*, meaning “the one who comes to walk alongside us to help us in whatever ways we need.” So, just as Christians have someone to walk alongside us in order to help us, we are also to help each other in the same way. “Encourage one another” is not a suggestion, but a command! And it is in the present tense, meaning that we are to do this for each other continually. God also commands us to build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11), to bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2), to regard one another as more important than self (Phil. 2:3), and to look out for the interests of others and not just to your own interests (Phil. 2:4).

What does it mean “to encourage one another”?

- To walk alongside someone and help them
- To urge someone to do something they need to do
- To comfort someone when they’re upset or grieving
- To help someone face a difficult situation with courage (to increase someone’s confidence, or to inspire them)
- To defend someone who is being accused or attacked
- To strengthen someone when they feel weak or depressed (to give another person “new heart”)
- To tell or teach someone something they need to know

Ways we should encourage each other

- Give a hug, a pat on the shoulder, or a handshake (if they are ok with these)
- Spend time with the person (this shows you care) If you’re not willing to spend time with them, they will assume you don’t care
- Listen to the person carefully and actively
- Provide the person with something he/she needs (food, clothing, etc., if God has given you that resource)
- Look for the positive aspects of the person and then compliment them
- Warn the person, especially if you have experience concerning their circumstances or if you know a Bible verse that applies
- Listen to their story
- Share your story with them if it would encourage or inspire
- Share a Bible verse that is appropriate and has spoken to you
- Offer to pray with them, and then pray for them during the week
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