

Why We Gather

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by Ben Purves

For the next few weeks I'll be writing a blog series on why we gather together as a church. For God's people, it is vital for us to be together with each other. As we start this series, let's begin with a classic text on fellowship — Hebrews 10:24-25.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

On the surface, the most basic and plain reason for us to gather as saints is that God has commanded it, and He warns His church about neglecting fellowship. When we gather, we gather in obedience to our Father. If we neglect the body of Christ, that is disobedience to God.

Here God speaks through the author of Hebrews, giving us several specific reasons to gather together:

First, we gather to stir. The language of "stirring up" or "provoking" one another to love and good works has a few underlying implications. We are in need of external provocation so that we move toward love and good works, and it is God's design that our brothers and sisters in Christ do so and are a sanctifying influence in our lives (Ephesians 4). If we isolate ourselves, we will not experience the blessing and growth of fellowship and service in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), and we're more likely to find ourselves like the fool of Proverbs 18:1. Instead, let us seek to stir each other, that God's love would be expressed through us, and that good works would be done for His glory!

Second, we gather to encourage. We need encouragement, especially as the Day of our Lord's return draws near. We should be gathering to encourage and strengthen one another, to remind each other of that blessed truth. We have many reasons for discouragement in this world, but we need the Body of Christ, we need to repeatedly hear the voices of the saints around us saying "Look to Jesus," and "Our Lord is returning to make all things new!"

So we invite you to come gather with us on Sundays as we consider our great Savior in the Gospel of Mark, and join us in fellowship throughout the week to be stirred and encouraged. Come initiate fellowship with your brothers and sisters, welcome each other as Christ has received you (Romans 15:7), and intentionally invest in and stir one another toward love and good works. Let's be faithful in fellowship and in the sharing of our lives, be it gathering for corporate worship or for a meal, that we might stir others and be stirred ourselves to love as Christ loves, and keep laboring for God's kingdom. We gather to glorify God by encouraging each other while we await Christ's return!