

Encouraging One Another

Topical

Objective: Inspire and direct individuals to encourage others in their Christian walk.

Reading: Philippians 2:1-8.

Introduction:

1. **“... if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love,”**
2. Do you find any encouragement in Christ, any consolation? What then ought to be our reaction, our response? Shouldn't we share it? Particularly when we look around and see folks who are NOT encouraged or motivated to stand true to godliness - YES.

We ought to have it in our hearts to encourage one another. (HOW?)

Think of someone who needs “encouraging” as one who is “discouraged”, that is, in need of “courage”. What can be done to give them more “courage” so they can carry on, so they can get up and do whatever needs to be done, so they can stand in the face of opposition, so they can repent publicly if need be, so they can resist temptations, so they can change a behavior?

“Encourage” stems from two words; “para” meaning “along side”, and “kaleo”, meaning “to call”. Hence, “to call someone along side of you, or to call to them from along side them. Often translated “to comfort”, but carries the meaning also of strengthening, speaking to someone to strengthen their resolve or determination.

It (παρρακαλεω) is also a name /description given to the Holy Spirit as in John 14:16, where it is variously translated as Comforter, Helper, or Counselor.

Simply based on the injunction to love one another as Christ loved us, and on the presence of the Spirit of God in us, we must conclude that we have a role and responsibility to fulfill in regard to other souls. If the spirit of God is upon us and dwells within us, we are to encourage one another! You can do this. (list individuals to make it personal). Let's consider how we might be an encouragement to other souls.

The first means of encouraging others that comes to mind is simply...

I. Coming out to church.

A. Assembling.

1. Hebrews 10:25, **“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.”**
2. This is God's own clear directive; The Great Physician's prescription for what ails people! Surely God knows best how Christians might encourage each other.
3. Assembling together shows we are in this together. We are on the same team. And this is not just for Sunday mornings – it is encouraging to assemble at other times as well.
4. When folks skip the assemblies, everyone feels like they are more alone, trying to serve God and grow spiritually all by themselves.
 - a. It is discouraging to show up to worship God and be almost the only one's present.
 - b. It is encouraging to see a full auditorium and hear many voices lifted in praise!
 - c. It is encouraging to look around and see how many others really care about God!
5. God sent them out two by two for a reason! Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, **“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. ¹⁰For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. ¹¹Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? ¹²And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.”**

B. Reach out and touch someone!

1. Determine to make it in for worship assembly. Come out for Men at Ten. Ladies' Inspirational Fellowship Time. Wednesday evening Bible Class. Fourth Sunday Breakfast. Gather with one or two others for prayer, discussion, Bible study at home during the week.

2. Be a part of God's team. Let folks see your devotion and courage – it is contagious.
3. Just being around some people can revive your courage and devotion – they have such confidence and enthusiasm that it makes you feel like you can do anything!
4. Here is where, in truth, God often works – through people!
5. Romans 1:12, ***“that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.”***
6. Christianity is not meant to be lived in isolation – it is intended to work through souls and focus on souls, for souls to strengthen souls.

It can be encouraging just to have more souls present, even if they are just warming a spot on a church pew, but it ought to be more. We can increase our effect by...

II. Sharing words of encouragement.

A. Positive affirmation.

1. Speak words to tell folks the good that you see in them. Tell them what you appreciate about them. Be specific.
2. I notice that when the Apostle Peter writes to encourage Christians in the face of adversities, one of the first things he does is remind them of WHO they are and WHAT they have in Christ
 - a. This provides internal motivation to carry on in courageous Christian witness.
 - b. He starts 1 Peter by reminding Christians they have been *chosen* by God.
 - c. The *elect*, who are living as *aliens* in a strange land – who are really citizens of heaven!
 - d. Christians have been *born again* to a *living hope* through the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ!
 - e. Privileged with an inheritance that can not fade away; a place in heaven reserved for them.
 - f. They are protected / shielded by the power of God! They may have trials and tribulations, but these are only for a little while, and with the purpose of proving their faith.
3. We can speak words like these to each other! We can remind each other of who we are and of what we have in Christ! Isn't it encouraging to be reminded that we have been chosen by God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, entrusted with the Gospel, adopted as God's own children, appointed and ordained as a kingdom of priests! Recipients of the greatest gift / honor ever granted in history of mankind!
4. Talk to people. Talk to them of godly and spiritual things.
5. Sometimes a notecard. Just to let them know someone is thinking of them – they are not alone. Many of us know the power of having received a little note at just the right time.

B. Simple reminders of spiritual truths.

1. Share encouraging god-things. 1 Corinthians 14:26, ***“... When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”*** Edification is much the same as “encouragement”. Not only educating as to God, but a “building up”. And is, again, a primary function of the Holy Spirit.
2. Recount Bible “stories” – events!
 - a. “Remember what happened to David against Goliath ...”
 - b. “Remember how everything seemed impossible, but the walls of Jericho came tumbling down?”
 - c. “Remember how God watched over Elijah, Moses, Abraham in midst of tribulations – victory!”
 - d. Romans 15:4, ***“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*** We need to be using these things!
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:14, ***“We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”***
4. Remind folks of their own past victories. (Remember when you were so worried about where your next meal would come from? Remember when God answered your prayer?)
5. Tell them of God's love for them. Make it personal. He gave His Son for YOU!
6. Tell of God's grace. Christ's sacrifice sufficient to cover any and all sin. Whatever you may have done, He can handle it!
7. Tell of God's surprising power.
 - a. He spoke all Creation into existence. Ephesians 3:20, ***“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,”***

- b. Tell where you have seen Him at work. Tell of “coincidences” you have seen or experienced.
- c. Acts 14:27, **“When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”** Likewise tell of what He has already done through you and other Christians.

Not just past stories/events, we can also use current times for encouraging others by

III. Sharing experiences.

A. Tell of struggles and victories you know of.

1. 1 Peter 5:9, **“But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”**
 - a. Ones needing encouragement are not the only one facing such things – others Christians face the same struggles regularly. We can find personal examples to share.
 - b. Tell of someone you know who faced health problems and kept the faith all the way through.
 - c. Tell of someone you know who came through her divorce and is still faithful.
 - d. Tell of someone you know who stands up against the persecution that goes on a work – how God is glorified and how souls have been touched.
2. There are many who do resist sin, who do keep their holiness and spiritual integrity through all kinds of tribulations, because they trust Jesus.
3. I am encouraged when I see how Steve and Kathy are facing their struggles, how Bob endures through his.
4. You can find failures if you look, but look at the examples of those who are victorious! Their faith is contagious and supportive!

B. Share their struggle.

1. Lend a helping hand! Join in the fight! Stand by and with them. What can be more encouraging in a fight / struggle, than to have a friend step up along side you? Whether it is a bag of groceries in a difficult time, a sympathetic ear, or just another’s positive spiritual presence with you.
2. Talk to them! (Meaning of the word is to “call” or “speak” along side.) Reason through the alternatives. Discuss what Satan is doing, why God may be allowing the testing of your faith. Possible outcomes.

C. Engage in prayer.

1. Pray with them. Sometimes folks are too discouraged to pray – you joining becomes a catalyst that enables them to start. God is the life / power source. You are the “jumper cables”.
2. Pray for them. Talk to God on their behalf! **“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”** This is spiritual warfare and prayer is a most effective weapon.
3. Sometimes, the ones you are helping and encouraging don’t even have to know.

So What?

It is not enough for folks to hear the Gospel once and be left entirely on their own. There is too much struggle, too much unseen spiritual warfare. God intends for Christians to share spiritual fellowship for mutual support. As they are directed in 1 Thessalonians; **“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Closing Prayer:

Encouraging One Another Topical

Reading: Philippians 2:1-8.

We ought to have it in our hearts to encourage one another.

Consider how we might be an encouragement to other souls.

I. Coming out to church.

A. Assembling.

Hebrews 10:25 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

B. Reach out and touch someone!

Romans 1:12

II. Sharing words of encouragement.

A. Positive affirmation.

B. Simple reminders of spiritual truths.

1 Corinthians 14:26 Romans 15:4 1 Thessalonians 5:14 Ephesians 3:20 Acts 14:27

III. Sharing experiences.

A. Tell of struggles and victories you know of.

1 Peter 5:9

B. Share their struggle.

C. Engage in prayer.

So What?

“... encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)