

Day 28 - Encouraging Growth

One of the most troubling realities of our current culture is that loneliness has reached an all-time high. As followers of Christ, we can live a life that contrasts the world. The way in which we love and support one another sets us apart in compelling ways. God's love for us can spill over from our lives and point people beyond niceties and dutiful acts of kindness. One way we demonstrate this is in all the different ways we gather together in support of one another - in worship services, serve teams, home groups, discipleship groups, or with others where we live, work, and play.

How could you love others where you live, worship, work, and play that sets you apart from our culture?

Our focus scripture for today is Hebrews 10:24-25

“²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Our gatherings are far more than just social networking, an hour of entertainment, or a weekly mood boost. God has built so much value into the various gatherings of His saints that He deliberately tells us not to neglect them. What if we believed that the weekly gathering was an opportunity to bring out the best in those around us? Or as an opportunity to serve the body as Jesus served His disciples? Or to be encouraged by the overwhelming holy roar of a room full of voices singing praises to a holy God? We live in a world where each one of us can curate and store a vast collection of amazing sermons and worship music from renowned teachers and artists all over the world in our pockets. But what these devices with their library of content cannot give us is the opportunity for face-to-face, soul-to-soul, real connection. Being present with one another is where we find the connection that overcomes the loneliness of our day. Being loved and loving others intentionally is what our culture longs for and will create the fertile soil needed for Jesus' followers to grow.

Pause to ask God to transform all who call Stonegate Fellowship *home*, into a compelling group of people who will not settle for fake connections but who will graciously provoke one another to love and good works.

As an invitation to a spiritual practice—a way to say “yes, Lord,” take some time today to identify the things that are keeping you from being fully present with the people in your life. Abstain from one or two of those things and replace them with acts of presence, attention, and encouragement.

Prepare to walk with God into the day before us, the Lord who loves us says in:

Romans 15:2 “Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up.”

Father, help us discern where you are leading us as a church - making Your invitation clear.

Jesus, help us become worshipers, friends, apprentices, and guides who live as disciple-makers in all areas of our everyday.

Spirit, help us become a disciple-making hub, loving the lost and proclaiming Jesus in all we do and say so our communities will flourish.