

- I'll be honest... there are not very many things that I actually remember from my college studies. Actually, it might be more accurate to say that there are not many things from my college studies that I actually put into use today. One of those few things that I actually remember and still use is the concept of opportunity cost. This was something that I learned in my Government and Econ class...those few times that I actually went. This concept stuck with me because it was so applicable to just about anything in my life. The concept teaches that for every decision you make you are making a sacrifice in some way. So for example, if it was time for class but I wanted to take a nap I had to decide which was the better option based upon the benefits of each decision. If I took a nap and missed class then I would be well rested and be able to play basketball longer that night, but I risked the possibility of missing a pop quiz and getting a "0" on my attendance grade for the day. On the other hand, I could go to class and make good grades, but I wouldn't be able to have as much fun... I wasn't the best college student so you could probably guess which choice I made most of the time.
- I share this with you because this concept is put into practice every single time a local congregation has a scheduled Bible study, worship service, home study, or anything other type of congregational activity. Many will choose to attend without even a second thought. They recognize the opportunity cost and that missing the churches activity costs them far more than anything else, but many will choose not to attend. I wonder about the thought process of those who fail to attend. Obviously there are circumstances that keep us away from time to time that we just don't have any control over (sickness, work, emergency, etc.), but I'd venture to say that most of the time it simply comes down to a decision on which one will be better for me. Which thing is more easily missed. And far too many times, that thing that isn't having to do with the Lord or the Church is picked. I don't think that automatically makes the individual who makes that choice for the other a heretic or reprobate, but it certainly is disappointing. I wonder though, if maybe the decision is made without fully understanding what is missed when we choose not to be a part of the assembly. Maybe if we are reminded about what happens when we come together, then we will be much more willing to not sacrifice the worship assembly, Bible study, etc. for other things. So this morning, I'd like for us to consider 4 great things that happen when we come together in hopes of reminding us all of the great things that happen when we come to assemble with God's people. The go-to text for the gathering of ourselves together is **Hebrews 10:25**, but I want us to expand our focus to **Hebrews 10:19-25**.

I. We show respect.

A. We show respect to God.

1. When we come together as the people of God we are focusing on Him and His Word. (We'll talk more about the specifics of this in a minute)
2. We focus on those things that mean something to us. Therefore if God is important in our lives, and if we respect Him then we will come together as His people and show Him that respect.
3. Notice here in this text (**vv.19-23**) that we get to be a part of this great body because of Jesus giving up His body and life for us. When we come together we get to show Him our great love, appreciation, and respect for His sacrifice.

B. We show respect to the church leadership.

1. A few chapters later (**Heb. 13:17**), the writer of the letter leaves the readers with the admonition to obey the leaders that are over them.
2. When we come together for our worship services and Bible studies, we are showing respect for the men who lead us and who have determined these to be the times that we meet.
3. Every decision that is made, is made with the souls of the flock involved. Every opportunity to be together to worship and study is made so that the group can be edified and encouraged.
4. There is also much work that is done by the deacons and preachers for the worship service to be put together well and for it to go well.
5. It is greatly encouraging to see a full house and many present when we come together, and inversely you can probably guess what it feels like when that isn't true.

C. We show respect to the other members.

1. When we come together we are to consider those that are there with us. (**v.24**)
2. We consider them out of love and respect, and by being there we are respecting them and their efforts to be there.
3. Again, it is greatly encouraging to see others here at the worship assembly or at other events, and we'll speak to that more specifically towards the end of the lesson.

II. We get to focus on God.

- A. This world has a lot of things fighting for our attention.
 - 1. We do have responsibilities that must be taken care of like our families, jobs, etc, but we cannot allow those things to take all of our attention away from God.
 - 2. Satan is also trying to fill our lives with other things that will take our attention away from God. Consider the 3 things he uses as bait to take God out of our focus. **(I John 2:15-17)**
 - a) Sensualism (attention to the flesh)
 - b) Materialism (attention to the material things)
 - c) Egotism (attention to self)
- B. These times of worship and study give us an opportunity to focus on our God and nothing else.
 - 1. When we come together we get to put those things away from our minds for even just a little while. We long for times to do that throughout the week and this is a time when it is actually possible. We should take it!
 - 2. We don't have to think about our jobs or other responsibilities. We don't have to focus on the stresses of this life.
 - 3. Instead, we get to dive into the text of God's Word. We get to sing praises to Him. We get to focus our hearts in prayer. We get to remember the great sacrifice given for us. We get to do all of these things that focus on our perfect Heavenly Father and our minds can be at ease during this time. It certainly is a blessing!

III. We encourage others.

- A. One of the easiest ways to encourage one another is to be together as the people of God with Him as the focus of our attention. This exhortation is similar to the one found in **3:12-14**.
- B. We can do much encouraging through our singing of songs **(Col. 3:16)**.
- C. We encourage others to love more.
 - 1. We show our love by being together and taking an interest in the lives of others.
 - 2. We might seek out ways to help our brothers or sisters in areas that they may be struggling.
 - 3. Through showing interests out of genuine love, we are encouraging our brother or sister to share that love with others, as well.
- D. We encourage others to grow in their good deeds for the glory of the Lord.
 - 1. We might discuss the good things we have going on in our lives as a means of encouraging others to get involved with us or in their own endeavors.
 - 2. It is much easier for others to be encouraged to do great work for the Lord if we are doing it first and showing them in can be done.
 - 3. When we come together it is a great opportunity to talk and encourage others in living their lives for Christ.

IV. We are encouraged in our faith.

- A. On Sundays, we get to spend a full day together with saints worshipping.
 - 1. We get to pray to God together. (**"they devoted themselves to.....prayers" Acts 2:42**)
 - 2. We get to sing songs to God together. **(Col. 3:16)**
 - 3. We get to support the Lord's Work together. **(I Cor. 16:2 & II Cor. 9:7)**
 - 4. We get to read and study God's Word together. **(“give attention to the public reading of Scripture” I Tim. 4:13)**
 - 5. We get to consider and observe the Lord's Sacrifice together. **(I Cor. 11:23-26)**
- B. These activities should fuel us to make it through the spiritual battle that we face in the following days.
 - 1. The Hebrew writer wanted the readers to be diligent in their encouragement and gathering together in light of “the day drawing near.”
 - 2. There has been much debate and speculation as to what exactly is being referenced as that “day.” Some would argue for the coming of AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem while others would argue for the Day of Judgement being referenced.
 - 3. Regardless, this day is a day of judgement, whether it be on a smaller or grander scale.
 - 4. We are past AD 70, so we are focusing on being ready for that final day of judgement. We must be watchful and always ready for that day because we do not know when it will happen.
 - 5. We can be made ready and prepared by having our spirits encouraged by the time we get to spend focused on God and encouraged by our brethren.

When that decision arises on what we will spend our time doing, I hope we will all remember the great benefits that are afforded to us when we come together with God's people for a worship service, Bible study here at the building, or outside of the building here. We have many great studies going on right now, and I hope that we all realize the great good that is being done in them and that we really consider giving our time to be a part of them. May God help us to be the type of people that truly desire to be about His work as much as we can be so that we may be focus on Him, be able to encourage others, and be encouraged by others as much as we can be.