

HOW CHURCH WORKS

"HOW TO GATHER"

HEBREWS 10:19-25

This Week's Core Competency

Faithfulness – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to that relationship. Proverbs 3:3, 4

*Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.*

*4 Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.*

In Hebrews 10:19-25 the writer exhorts his readers to remain true to Jesus Christ, the one who opened a way for them into the very presence of God and who is for them a great priest, and to persevere in the faith despite fierce persecution.

First, he encourages them to "draw near to God." In general, the imagery suggests coming together to know and be known; it suggests coming together to enjoy a close relationship. James tells his readers, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (4:8). Jesus, himself, says much the same thing in Revelation 3:20 where he says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

More specifically, the imagery suggests drawing

Our hope is based on the unfailing promise of God; why should we not cherish it confidently and confess it boldly?

– F. F. Bruce

close to worship and to serve. As one writer observes, "In this exhortation the readers are viewed as priests. This is the same truth Peter affirmed when, addressing believers, he said, 'You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 2:5). John reiterates that same truth when he states that Christ 'has made us kings and priests to His God and Father' (Rev. 1:6) The imagery of this exhortation is based on the concept that all believers have been constituted as priests before God" (J. Dwight Pentecost, *A Faith that Endures*, 167). And why is it that a priest draws near? It is, of course, to offer sacrifices of praise and worship.

Second, he tells his readers, "Hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess." Writers are quick to comment on the fact that he mentions *hope* rather than *faith*. "This is an unusual expression," one says, "and we might have expected it, 'the hope we profess'" (Leon Morris, "Hebrews," in *The Bible Expositor's Commentary*, 12:104). However, some of them had given up hope, not faith, in the face of relentless persecution, and others were entertaining doing the same—which explains his choice of words. "The readers of this epistle were being tempted to forsake their confession of Jesus Christ by going back to the Old Covenant worship. The writer did not exhort them to hold on to their salvation, because their security was in Christ and not in themselves (Heb. 7:25). Rather, he invited them to hold fast 'the profession [confession] of . . . hope'" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Hebrews," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 2:315).

cont. pg. 2

Third, he tells his readers, "Consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Love and good deeds go together. In fact, their close relationship is evident in Paul's prayer for the Philippians. In 1:9, 10 of his epistle to them, he writes, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best . . ." The apostle presumes that love acts, and consequently, love must be accompanied by knowledge and insight. The one who loves must know the best thing to do for the one in need, and knowing *that* takes wisdom as well as knowledge. What's more, the kind of stimulating that the writer to the Hebrews had in mind cannot be done from a distance, which explains why he goes on to warn them against giving up meeting together. The ESV translates the warning, "not neglecting to meet together." "Apparently, some of the wavering believers had been absenting themselves from the church fellowship. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a believer gets from the assembly, but rather on what he can contribute to the assembly. Faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works" (2:315).

For Discussion

Pick one of the three exhortations in Hebrews 10:22-25 and discuss three ways it can be followed.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let 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. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 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. (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 19.
- * Box "since" indicating *result* in vv. 19, 21.
- * Circle "Jesus" in v. 19.
- * Underline "Most Holy Place" in v. 19.
- * Bracket "new and living" in v. 20.
- * Underline "the curtain" in v. 20.
- * Bracket "that is, his body" in v. 20.
- * Circle "house of God" in v. 21.
- * Highlight "let us" in vv. 22, 23, 24.
- * Bracket "full assurance of faith" in v. 22.
- * Underline "sprinkled" and "washed" in v. 22.
- * Circle "unswervingly" in v. 23.
- * Circle "spur" in v. 24.
- * Bracket "love and good deeds" in v. 24.
- * Draw a line through "let us" (2x) in v. 25.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 25.
- * Circle "the day" in v. 25.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Explain the *significance* of "therefore" in verse 19.
2. The writer uses images from the Old Testament in verses 19-22. Explain the *significance* of "the Most Holy Place" in verse 19.
3. He refers to "a new and living way" in verse 20. What way to where is that?
4. Explain the *significance* of "the curtain" in verse 20.
5. According to verse 21, believers have "a great priest." So what?
6. Put what "draw near to God" means in your own words.
7. He refers to "the hope we possess" in v. 23. What hope is that?
8. Explain the relationship between "love" and "good deeds" in verse 24.
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the relationship of "meeting together" to the final exhortation.

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Hebrews 10:19 begins with "therefore" indicating that what follows results from what precedes. Reading closely, it's easy to see that the three exhortations in verses 22-25 are based on a two-fold theological summary found in verses 19-21 and that this summary draws the extended discussion of Jesus, our superior high priest and superior sacrifice, to an end (4:14-10:18). As one author explains, "We have now concluded the solid doctrinal section that constitutes the main section of the epistle. As Paul often does, the writer of Hebrews exhorts his readers on the basis of the doctrine he has made so clear. Because the great teachings he has set forth are true, it follows that those who profess them should live in a manner befitting them. There are resemblances between the exhortation in this paragraph and that in 4:14-16. But we must not forget that the intervening discussion has made clear what Christ's high priestly work has done for his people. On the basis of Christ's sacrifice, the writer exhorts his readers to make the utmost use of the blessing that has been won for them" (Leon Morris, "Hebrews," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12:103).

And what exactly has Jesus accomplished for his people? First, according to verse 19, they have gained free access to God because of his sacrifice. Jesus' blood was shed and his body was broken for their sins so that they might come into his presence. Jesus pioneered a "new" way to God that did not previously exist, a way based on a new covenant. Not only is the way new, it is also "living," a way leading to life based on a relationship with the living Christ. Under the old covenant, only the high priest was permitted to go behind the curtain, which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, into the very presence of God and only once a year—something he did cautiously, not boldly. In fact, "it had become the custom for the high priest not to linger in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement lest people be terrified (M *Yoma* 5:1)" (103). But all under the new covenant can approach him. And second, according to verse 21, they have gained a great priest about whom the writer says elsewhere, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our

weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (4:15). Consequently, those with Jesus as their high priest have every reason to "approach the throne of grace with confidence" in order to receive his mercy and gracious help (4:16), and no reason to not "draw near to God" in order to worship and serve him (10:22).

In verses 22-25, the writer unpacks three inferences drawn from the profound Christological foundation he has laid. First, "Let us draw near to God." Having been fully cleansed and consecrated by the work of Christ, we know we will not be rebuffed when we approach God with a sincere heart desiring fellowship. Second, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess." Because God keeps his word, we can and should persevere regardless of our circumstances. And third, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." We are called to care for one another and stimulate one another spiritually and morally. This final exhortation is followed by two participial phrases translated "not neglecting to meet together" and "encouraging one another" in the ESV. These two contrasting phrases joined by "but" elaborate on the exhortation in the previous verse indicating what we can do to "spur one another on." Clearly what we cannot do is stop meeting together on a regular basis because this kind of accountability cannot be maintained from a distance. Meeting together provides a place and an occasion for mutual encouragement and exhortation. One writer puts it this way: "The entire community must assume responsibility to watch that no one grows weary or becomes apostate. This is possible only when Christians continue to exercise care for one another personally" (William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47b, *Hebrews 9-13*, 290). And another comments, "Any early Christian who attempted to live like a pious particle without the support of the community ran serious risks in an age when there was no public opinion to support him" (Moffatt, cited by Morris, 105). And so it is today.

The Message of the Passage

Given the free access you have to God through Christ, your great priest, draw near to him, hold tightly to the hope you have, and look for ways to encourage one another toward love and good deeds.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“How to Gather”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 19 **therefore** "The inferential particle [*oun*], 'therefore,' sums up the entire argument to this point, but more specifically the 'crowning affirmation' in 8:1-2 and its development in 9:1-10:18 (cf. Michel, 343)" (Lane, 282). "The writer sums up the theological truths that have occupied him, for the most part, since 4:14, including the Son's appointment as high priest and his high-priestly offering. He crafts this passage around three focal exhortations: 'Let us draw near to God' (10:22) 'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess' (10:23); and 'Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds' (10:24). In this way, he uses the exposition concerning Christ as the foundation for motivating his hearers to action, while at the same time accomplishing a smooth changeover to the hortatory material in 10:26 and following" (George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, 340).

vv. 19, 21 **since** The writer provides a two-fold foundation for his first exhortation, "Let us draw near to God:" 1) "we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body," and 2) "we have a great priest over the house of God." "The two bases are related grammatically to the exhortation to 'draw near' but conceptually extend also to the other two exhortations in 10:19-25" (341).

v. 19 **Jesus** "The emphasis in the use of the personal name 'Jesus' is on the full humanity of Christ, and thus on the validity of his redemptive sacrifice on behalf of the human family. It is striking that whenever the writer makes his most emphatic assertions concerning the saving work of Christ, he makes an explicit reference to the blood of Jesus (9:12, 14; 10:19, 29; 12:24; 13:12, 20) . . . a graphic expression for Jesus' death viewed in its sacrificial aspect" (Lane, 283; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 319).

v. 19 **most Holy Place** See Ex 25:8, 17-22; Lev 16:2; Nu 7:89; cf., Heb 9:1-14, 24. "In Ch. 9:8 we have already seen the more general term 'the holy place' used with reference to the earthly sanctuary where the inner compartment was actually meant. So here, as indicated by the words 'through the veil', it is to the very throne of God that believers in Christ have free entry--not the material symbol of His throne where, as in the pre-exilic holy of holies, His invisible presence was up-borne by the cherubim; but to His true and spiritual dwelling-place" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, 245).

v. 20 **new and living** "New" in both a temporal and a qualitative way; it "had not previously existed, "and it participates in the incorruptible freshness of the new covenant" (Lane, 283). "Living" because it "leads to life" (283) or perhaps, because it is not the way of dead animals but the living Lord Jesus himself (Morris, 12:103).

v. 20 **the curtain** I.e., the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Ex 26:31-33; 40:21). "The 'curtain' goes back once more to the imagery of the tabernacle, for it was through the curtain that hung before the Most Holy Place that the high priest passed into the very presence of God" (Morris, 103).

v. 20 **that is, his body** This clause "is explicative of the preceding sentence as a whole" (Lane, 284); "no metaphor is intended in 10:20" (see extended discussion 275, 76); cf., "the new, living way which he has opened for us through the curtain, the way of his flesh" (NEB). Note the parallelism in verses 19 and 20: "by means of the blood of Jesus" // "that is, by means of his body." Believers enter God's presence by Christ's sacrifice.

v. 21 **house of God** "Because of his person and work, our priest is 'over the house of God,' a reference reverberating from the writer's earlier discussion in 3:1-6, which sets forth a comparison of Moses and Christ as leaders of God's people" (Guthrie, 343). "The House of God includes the whole Christian economy both in its earthly and in its heavenly elements; in its organization and in its members" (Westcott, 321).

v. 22 **full assurance of faith** I.e., confidence coming from faith (cf., 11:1). "In full assurance [*plerophoria*] of faith' (cf., 6:11), a phrase that can also be translated 'conviction' or 'certainty of faith.' *Plerophoria* describes the clear-headed confidence and stability generated in true believers as a result of Christ's work on their behalf . . . faith suggests a firm trust placed in God, who has shown himself faithful in his dealings with his people" (Guthrie, 343).

v. 22 **sprinkled, washed** Most likely an allusion to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to priestly service (Ex 29:4, 21; Lev 8:6, 30), and hence a figurative reference to believers' having been prepared to "draw near" by the sacrifice of Christ. The perfect tense participles express "not conditions of approach to God which are yet to be achieved, but conditions already possessed (EGT)" (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 703).

v. 23 **unswervingly** Cf., "without wavering" (NKJV, NRSV, NLT); "unwaveringly" (the NET Bible). The term is found nowhere else in the NT. Philo used it to signify the immutability of God and also the stability of the friends of God who stand by his side (Lane, 288).

v. 24 **spur** The Gk. noun [*paroxysmos*] means "irritating, inciting, stimulation" (Rienecker, 703) usually in a bad sense. "it is most unusual to have it used in a good sense, and the choice of the unusual word makes the exhortation more striking" (Morris, 105).

v. 25 **Let us** (2x) Lit., "not neglecting" and "encouraging" (ESV).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I once heard a comedian who said he had a "drug" problem when he was younger. His parents drug him to church on Sunday mornings, Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. He went on to say how thankful he was that his parents had "drugged" him. I totally agree! I love to say that I grew up in church! I love the fact that my parents made a commitment to have us in church most Sundays of the year. Even though there were days in my teenage years I tried every excuse I could think of to sleep in on a Sunday morning, I'm glad my mom stood firm. Looking back, it was a gift - one that has blessed me over and over again in my life. Today we begin a new series on the church and how it works. My challenge to parents is to make a commitment to be here each week. I know that there are many activities on your calendar. As a mom of three, I get it! It's hard to juggle all of the responsibilities that come with an active family but I want my kids to be able to say, "I grew up in church." Thank you for giving your kids great memories of belonging to God's church!

Note to Parents: In addition to the texts used in the adult scrolls, the kids will be learning about the early church from passages in Acts.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Hebrews 10:19-25, Acts 1:1-14

1. In Hebrews 10:24, what are we to spur one another on toward?
2. Hebrews 10:25 encourages us to do two things. What are they?
3. In the Acts passage, what did the people do once they were all together? (v. 14)

What Do You Think

1. Believers in the church should encourage each other. How can you do that?
2. Name one person at church you will pray for this week.
3. What is your favorite part of church?

What R U Going To Do

As a family, make a commitment that you are going to come to church together as many times as you can this year! For this series, we are memorizing the entire passage of Acts 2:42-47. Post it somewhere you will see it often.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Faithfulness - Sticking with God, no matter what, makes me a winner

Memory Verse

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.