



THE ORCHARD

Series: Healthy Rhythms for a Fruitful Life

Title: The Rhythm of Gathering Together Part 2

Passage: Hebrews 10:19-25

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Introduction:

- Last week, we learned about the confidence we have in Christ.
 - Jesus is the great high priest who gives us access to the Father.
 - Through his death, the curtain is torn in two.
 - That means we can draw near to God.
 - That means we can hold on, to the hope we have in Christ.
 - And that means, we can serve, without getting burned out, because we can find strength in Christ.
- As we continue to look at setting healthy rhythms for a fruitful life, I want us to see today, how we can serve and care for others.
 - It's great that we can serve others with the strength of Christ.
 - But we also need to think about how to live this out in our lives.
 - And so, we'll see today, how we can practically serve one another, through the power of Jesus Christ, and what this looks like.
 - That's the theme for today.
- Here we see 3 ways, we can serve one another.



Point 1:

- First, our passage shows, how we can serve and care for others, by considering one another.
- Take a look at verse 24.
 - It says:
 - **“And let us consider how to stir up one another...”**
Hebrews 10:24-25
- This word, consider, has the meaning of contemplation, or having concern.
 - In other words, caring for others means, we need to think deeply about others, to have an interest in others.
- And, in these verses, the writer talks about two ways we can consider others.
 - He speaks about considering, how to stir others up.
 - And he speaks about considering, how to encourage others.
 - We’re going to look in more detail at what these mean.
 - But to briefly summarize these verses.
 - We’re commanded here, to think about, how to help others bear fruit in their lives, and how to help others persevere in their faith.
 - That’s what it means to stir up and encourage.
- We need to think about how we can bear fruit, and how we can persevere.
 - But we also need to consider, how to help others bear fruit, and how to help others persevere.



- “**And let us consider how to stir up one another...encouraging one another...**”
- And I want to remind you, the writer isn’t speaking to people who were living in a peaceful season of life.
 - The writer is speaking to Christians who were facing persecution.
 - He’s writing to Christians who were facing trials and hardships.
 - He’s writing to Christians who saw, others walk away from the faith.
 - Some people were giving up, meeting together.
 - Some stopped going to church.
 - Others stopped praying together.
 - And he tells these Christians who remained, to consider, how to stir up others, to consider, how to encourage others.
- It’s easy to consider others, when life is good.
 - It’s easy to consider others, when others consider us.
 - It’s easy to consider others, when ministry is growing.
 - But here, the Bible is reminding us, that Christian service, is about serving others, even when life is hard.
 - Christian service, is about serving others, without expecting anything in return.
 - In fact, Christian service, is about loving others, even when, growth is slow.
- Now, of course, there’s a time to rest.
 - There are times we may have to do less, and not more.
 - But, very seldom, is there ever going to be, an ideal time, to serve others.



- And so, as best as we can, we need to learn to consider, how to stir others up, and how to encourage others in their faith.
- Someone may say:
 - “Pastor Tom, that’s a really hard command to follow.”
 - “Is this even possible?”
- The answer is yes.
 - It’s very possible.
 - Why?
 - Because, as we saw from last week, our strength comes from Christ.
 - Our hope is secure in Christ.
 - Jesus Christ has prepared a reward for you.
 - And so, when we serve others, and receive nothing back.
 - We can rejoice, and continue to love, because of the reward God has prepared for us.
- Listen to what Jesus says in Luke chapter 6, verses 32 to 35:
 - **“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great...” Luke 6:32-35**
- As you look back on your life, can’t you think of people who were patient with you?



- Mature believers who considered you, even when they were going through rough times in their lives?
- I can think of several people, who considered me, and prayed for me, even when life wasn't easy for them.
- And I can truly say, it's through their love, that I was able to bear fruit, and persevere in my faith.
- Likewise, as we remember the hope we have in Christ, let's learn to consider others, even when it's hard.
- Even when we receive, nothing in return.
- Because your reward is great in heaven.

- And I want to remind you that, one another, includes everyone in the church.
 - This doesn't mean you need to think about every single person in the church.
 - But it does mean, we don't show favoritism.
 - It means we're willing to care for anyone that God sends our way.
 - This means we're mindful of children, as well as adults.
 - It means, we care for those who serve in visible roles, and for those who serve behind the scenes.
 - It means, we pay attention to those we know well, and we make room for those who are newer to our community.
 - It means, we make an effort to get to know others, are intentional about reaching others.
 - It means, we consider those who are outspoken, but we also look for those who may be shy, and easily missed.
 - It means, we show concern for those who think like us, and even those who see things differently than us.
 - The Bible says, in James chapter 2:
 - **“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” James 2:1**



- And so, let's care for others, even through our trials.
 - Because we have strength in Christ.
 - And let's learn to care for others, even when we don't receive anything in return.
 - Because our reward is great in heaven.
- Our passage shows, that we can care for others, and serve others, by considering one another.

Point 2:

- Second, our passage shows, that we can care for others, by stirring up one another.
- Take a look at verses 24 and 25 again.
 - **“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works...” Hebrews 10:24-25**
- This word, to stir, has the meaning of a sharp attack, or a strong disagreement, or to provoke someone.
- That's the meaning this word has in Acts 15:39.
 - That's when Paul and Barnabas had a strong disagreement with one another, and decided to part ways.
 - Strong disagreement, and stir up, are the translations of the same word.
 - And in Acts 15, it describes the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas.
- Now, I want to be clear, the Bible isn't commanding us to have sharp disagreements with others.



- That would be contrary to what the Bible teaches us.
- We're not called to provoke one another to anger.
- And so, we have to ask, what is the Bible trying to teach us here?
- It's possible to use this word, in a negative way, to sharply disagree, but you can also use it, in a positive way.
 - And so, instead of pushing someone to anger, it can also carry the meaning of pushing someone to love.
 - The force is the same.
 - The difference is the goal.
- And so, in our passage, it has the meaning of strongly stirring up, or spurring others on.
- Think of a football coach during the halftime break.
 - His team is losing the game.
 - And so, he says to his team:
 - "What's wrong with you guys."
 - "You're better than this."
 - "You're not focused."
 - "You're not doing what we practiced."
 - "Stop complaining."
 - "Stop looking discouraged."
 - "Get out there, and let's win this game."
 - This is what it looks like to stir others up.
- And I want you to notice the purpose of our stirring up.
 - The writer wants us to consider how we can stir up others, to love and good works.



- In other words, not only are we commanded to love others, we're being commanded to help others, love others.
- We're being commanded to strongly push others to good works, and to bear fruit.
- That is, to strongly plead, to push others, to give their lives for the glory of Christ.

- And I want to make it very clear, that this passage doesn't say:
 - "Judge one another."
 - "Or guilt trip, one another."
 - "Or force, one another."

- Rather, the kind of stirring we're called to do, is grounded in what Christ has done for us.
 - In other words, we're called to stir up one another, by remembering Jesus.
 - Verses 19 to 23, explain what Jesus did.
 - And so, the writer is saying:
 - "Look at what Jesus did for you."
 - "He gave his life for you."
 - "He suffered for you."
 - "We have confidence in him."
 - "And all this, because he loves you."
 - "And so, let's serve him."
 - "Let's love him."
 - That's the kind of stirring, we're commanded to do.

- Let me outline a few ways you might stir up others, to love and good works.
- You can stir others up, by your example.



- People are often stirred up, by what they see.
- When you consistently serve with joy.
- When you show patience in difficult situations.
- When you love people that are overlooked.
- When you pour your heart out, to care for others.
- That'll stir up others, to follow your example.
- More and more, besides Jesus Christ, possibly my favorite character in the Bible is Ruth.
 - Do you remember the story of Ruth?
 - Naomi, lost her husband, and her two sons to death.
 - And as she's planning on returning home to Bethlehem, from Moab.
 - Ruth, her daughter-in-law says:
 - **“Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried.” Ruth 1:16-17**
 - And because of her faithfulness to Naomi and to God, Ruth was able to help Naomi, who was bitter, and grieving, and felt she had nothing more to live for.
 - But by the end of the story, we see how Naomi is blessed by the Lord.
 - Ruth wasn't wealthy like Abraham, she didn't glow like Moses, she wasn't a great warrior like David, she wasn't a theological genius like the Apostle Paul, but she was faithful to God, and faithful to Naomi.
 - And she was able to help a broken woman, find joy in the Lord.
- In the same way, we don't have to know a lot, or have many gifts, but we do need to be faithful.



- And by our example, we can stir up others, who are struggling to, love and good works.
- You can stir up others, by setting an example, but you can also stir others up, by inviting them to serve with you.
 - It's true that our staff is responsible for recruiting people to serve.
 - But this verse is also teaching, that every follower of Christ is responsible to recruit volunteers as well.
 - This verse doesn't say, "Church staff members, stir up others to love and good works."
 - No, this is a command for all believers to ask and recruit.
 - And so, in the next two weeks, can you ask one or two people to serve in your ministry?
 - I have no doubt, there are people who may be willing to serve, but they just need a little push.
 - I have no doubt, there are people who are ready to serve, but they just need to be asked.
 - Let's stir others up, by inviting them to serve.
- You can also stir others up by setting a faithful example, you can stir up others by inviting them to serve, and you can stir others up, especially our children, by serving in our children's ministry.
 - For those of you serving in our children's ministry, I want you to know, that all of us, are very grateful for what you're doing.
 - And I want all of us to know, that currently, we need about 4 more volunteers.
 - I think two more teachers, and 2 more helpers.
 - But, we especially need more teachers.
 - We'll also need about 12 to 15 more volunteers this coming Fall.



- We want to create another class, so that we can separate our 2nd to 5th grade class.
- So please, consider stirring up our children to love and good works.

- The children's ministry team at Ashland Baptist Church, told their senior pastor, Pastor David Prince, they'd have to cancel their Summer Vacation Bible School, because they didn't have enough volunteers.
 - Pastor David said that if he could just make a Sunday announcement about the need, they wouldn't need to cancel.
 - The children's ministry team had their doubts.
 - But they went along with the pastor's plan, instead of cancelling the event.
 - When Sunday morning came, the pastor began his announcement, by pointing out all the children, he saw while driving up.
 - Then he said:
 - "I know something about every single one of those children, including my own: Satan hates them and wants to destroy their lives and souls."
 - "VBS is not something to keep the kids busy in the summer.
 - "It is missions and spiritual warfare."
 - "At what other time do lost people call the church and ask when an event is taking place so they can send their children to us?"
 - After saying this, Pastor David concluded by observing how often we complain about the culture and it's harmful influences on our children.
 - And then he said:
 - "What are we going to do about this?"



- “VBS exists because of the gospel, the only hope for children to be saved and transformed in a lost world.”
- And sure enough, they had more volunteers that summer than ever before, and it was the largest VBS the church had ever seen.
- Our Sunday school, from pre-school to 5th grade, isn’t just childcare.
 - It’s a way for us to share the hope we have in Christ.
 - It’s a way for us to stir up our children to love and good works.
 - And so, I want to stir you up, to stir up our children.
- We can care for others and stir them up, by setting an example, by inviting others to serve, and by considering our children, and in due time, we will bear fruit, and we’ll see amazing things that God does through redeemed sinners like us.

Point 3:

- Third, our passage shows, that we can care for others, by encouraging one another.
- Again, take a look at our verses:
 - **“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.”**
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- This word, encourage, is different from the word, to stir up.



- To stir up, has a sharp sense.
- But to encourage has the sense of coming alongside, to comfort, or to cheer on.
- Picture a race.
 - And as the runners are coming to the end of the race, you see a parent cheering on their child.
 - You got this son!
 - You got this daughter!
 - Keep it up.
 - You're almost there.
 - You're doing a great job.
 - Encouragement, isn't a football coach stirring up his team, it's a parent cheering on their child.
- And I want you to notice why the writer wants us to encourage others.
 - He wants us to encourage others, so we can make it to the end.
 - Stirring up, was focused on service.
 - Whereas, encouragement, is focused on perseverance.
 - He says:
 - **“Encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”**
 - The day, is the final judgement day.
 - It's the day that Jesus returns.
 - It's the day when all things on earth come to an end.
- And if Jesus doesn't come back in our lifetime, the writer is also implying that we need to encourage one another, until the day we pass away.
 - Encourage one another, to keep the faith, to hold on to Jesus, to keep loving him, until your final days on earth.



- That's the meaning of this verse.
- And I want you to notice, how we're commanded to encourage one another, by meeting together.
 - It's by meeting together, that we can persevere in our faith.
 - Now, when speaking of meeting together, the writer is most likely speaking about various meetings in the church.
 - He's speaking about worshipping together, and praying together, and meeting in smaller groups.
 - This doesn't mean we need to attend every event in the church.
 - But it does mean, we need to consistently attend worship services, and consistently meet with others in smaller groups, so that we can be encouraged to persevere.
 - And so that, we can encourage others to persevere as well.
- Now, I want to be clear, this saying that you can lose your salvation or that your salvation is dependent on how many meetings you attend.
 - But, one way God strengthens our faith, is by us, meeting with other believers.
- Think about prayer.
 - God doesn't need our prayers to accomplish will.
 - But he has ordained our prayers, so that, through our prayers, he brings about his will.
- Or think about reading God's word.



- God could instantly give us information into our minds, so we can grow in faith.
- But God designed the world, so that, as we study his word, we grow in faith.
- In the same way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God will keep us to the end.
 - But one way that God keeps us to the end, is through the encouragement of other believers.
 - That means, we need the church, we need encouragement from others.
- Redwood trees are known to grow up to 200, to even 350 feet tall.
 - What's interesting is that they don't have deep roots.
 - Instead, redwoods are able to grow, because their roots interlock with other redwood trees around them.
 - This creates a strong support system, so the trees can grow tall.
- In the same way, for us to persevere and grow in faith, we need the community of believers.
 - It's by gathering together, that we can hold on to faith, and persevere to the end.
- Martin Luther writes: “At home in my own house there is no warmth or vigor in me, but in the church when the multitude is gathered together, a fire is kindled in my heart and it breaks its way through.” (Hughes, Hebrews, 263)
- And so, let's not give up going to church, as is the habit of some.



- But let's keep going to church.
- Let's keep showing up every week, because we need to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, because that's what we need hear, regardless of what else is happening in our lives.
- Let's keep going to church, because like Martha, we've been working all week, and like Mary, we need to sit at the feet of Jesus.
- Let's keep going to church, because our souls our weak, and we need to sing and hear our brothers and sisters sing the great truths of the Bible.
- Let's keep going to church, even when our church isn't perfect, because we have a Savior who loves the church, and died for the church, and is one day going to present her without blemish, or wrinkle.
- Let's keep going to church, because we have brothers and sisters, who have to walk miles, who endure persecution, and worship in secret, and if they can worship, so can we.
- Let's keep going to church, because there are brothers and sisters who are struggling, and they need us to encourage them, and pray for them, and stir them up.
- Let's keep going to church, because the rest we ultimately need, isn't more sleep or a longer vacation, but to hear again, the promise of the gospel, that we're forgiven, and loved, and new.
- Let's keep going to church, because it's through gathering together, that we can persevere to the end, until Jesus returns.

Conclusion:



- Because of our hope in Christ, we have power to serve others, and love others, even in difficult seasons in life.
 - And so, let's continue to serve, by considering others.
 - Let's continue to serve, by stirring up others.
 - And let's continue to serve, by encouraging others.
 - For your reward, is great in heaven.