



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

December 22, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

BE THE CHURCH

Let us consider how we may spur one another on . . . not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.

Hebrews 10:24-25

READ Hebrews 10:19-25

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Dave and Carla spent months looking for a church home. Following health guidelines, which limited various in-person experiences, made it even more difficult. They longed for connection to a body of believers in Jesus. "It's a hard time to find a church," Carla emailed me. Within me rose a realization from my own longing to be reunited with my church family. "It's a hard time to be the church," I responded. In that season, our church had "pivoted," offering food in surrounding neighborhoods, creating online services, and phoning every member with support and prayer. My husband and I participated and yet wondered what else we could do to "be the church" in our changed world.

In Hebrews 10:25, the writer exhorts readers not to neglect "meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but [encourage] one another." Perhaps due to persecution (vv. 32–34) or maybe as a result of simply growing weary (12:3), the struggling early believers needed a nudge to keep being the church.

And today, I need a nudge too. Do you? When circumstances change how we experience church, will we continue to be the church? Let's creatively encourage one another and build each other up as God guides us. Share our resources. Send a text of support. Gather as we're able. Pray for one another. Let's be the church.

By **Elisa Morgan**

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, please show me how to be the church. Amen

How can you be a help to those today who can't gather in a church building? How does the church fill your need to be a part of a much larger purpose?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish believers in Jesus who, due to persecution and hardship, were in danger of drifting from the faith. Therefore, it makes sense that the author would remind them of the confidence they could have in Christ, for it provides an antidote for their doubts. The New Bible Commentary says, "The word translated confidence is found in four important contexts in Hebrews (3:6; 4:16; 10:19; 10:35). Fundamentally, it's a confidence of free and open access to God . . . based on the unique sacrifice of Jesus (by the blood of Jesus)." As a result, the believers were encouraged to embrace the confidence that they were truly part of God's "house" (3:6), to enter His presence confidently in prayer (4:15-16), to enter God's presence in worship (10:19), and to maintain that confidence in living out their lives (10:35). – By **Bill Crowder**

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