

Hebrews 10 (NIV)

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another ...

This morning I sat through two educational meetings for children I evaluated as a school psychologist. In what is now a new normal I did this from home. Thanks to technologies I could see my colleagues for the first time in almost two weeks. Although the work was serious, I must say it was good to see these people.

I miss my church family.

When I was younger I thought of the phrase in Hebrews about “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” as a rule that translated roughly as “you must go to church.” If you skipped church you were “forsaking the assembly.”

But how to do you “go to church” when you can not “go to church?”

Only later in life did I understand that scripture often tells us what to do because it is good advice – good for us here and now. We assemble because it is good for us. We go not only for ourselves but for others. In passage after passage there is the demonstration that Christians are to live in community.

Under the present circumstances building and keeping community is going to take some work. I thank John, Don, and the others who are working to get out messages and to help us stay in touch.

John has twice emailed that there are those who will do shopping for those who should not leave the house due to age or health. This is a great example of “love and good deeds” within a community. It would be tempting to visit, but food would have to be left on the doorstep for safety. Please take this seriously. The last time I was in a grocery store many there were elderly. This virus is too dangerous. Allow us to serve each other.

As this time progresses our leadership will certainly find other ways to help us stay together. Let’s encourage them.

And as Hebrews says to do, let us encourage each other.

In 1527 Martin Luther faced uncertain times from a plague in his town of Wittenberg. He wrote to a friend:

“I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. ... See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

Luther was not always right, but sometimes this man of words could say something well.