

The Importance of Meeting Together

Preacher: Ron E.

Date: September 27, 2026

Church: 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel

References: **Hebrews 10**, Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Peter 3:18; Acts 2:42; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-16; Colossians 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:16; Acts 20:32; Revelation 22:20

So there we are. Park Crest Bible Chapel, West Heights Gospel Chapel, Cascades Church, and Ladner Gospel Assembly. So what I'm trying to get across is important. It wasn't the name of Cascades Gospel Chapel; it was what's involved. What do they preach? What do they teach?

And the whole thing is, it's for us to meet together—whether it's by Zoom, whether it's by Skype, whether it's in person—to help one another, to encourage one another, to pray for one another. I am so excited to be part.

Now, some of the different verses give the "not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." I'm here to encourage you, and you're here to encourage me, and you're here to encourage that person in front of you, behind you, beside you, on each side. We're here to encourage one another.

Another version of the same verse is: "not forsaking our assembly together, as is the habit of some, encouraging one another, encouraging one another. Not avoiding worship together as some, but spurring each other, especially as we see it." It's so important to be together. It's so important. You people up in Skype, it's wonderful that you're there, because you know what they can do? They can phone you. They can email you. They can write you. They can text you. We are going to find, as this message goes on, we are **not alone**. We are together in this and we need each other. We have to encourage one another.

Another verse is: and let us not neglect our meeting together, as some do, but encourage. The whole idea is encouraging. When I look at that picture at home, I pray for you. I have your book here. I have the book—is this book—but I have this book also. And this book isn't just to write on my grocery list on the back page; this book is to pray for you. I don't know you all, and sometimes I'll bring up Tar, I'll bring up Ting, I'll bring up Thomas, I'll bring up Son, I'll bring up the different names, and it's to encourage one another. And that's the important thing in the whole thing: the importance of meeting together.

[Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV] - ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Exhorting, encouraging, building up. And when we fall, what do we do? We don't squash the person and say, "Ah, you're a sinner." No, you take your hand down and you say, "Can I help you? Let's go to Starbucks, have a coffee. Let's go to Kim's. What seems to be the problem? Can I help you? Can I encourage you? Oh, yeah, let's pray together." It is so important. And I'm finding it even more important as I'm getting older and times around us are getting tougher. Times are getting tougher.

You know, in a world that values independence and isolation, God calls His people to gather together. The local church is not merely a building or an organization; it's a family. I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God—a body, a fellowship of believers united in Christ. You know, if I said to you, "There's no Lone Rangers in the Christian life," some of you wouldn't understand. Because when I was a kid, yeah, there was this cowboy called Lone Ranger. So, I mean, we're going back fifty, sixty, seventy years. But trying to say that picture: individualism.

I want to tell people about Jesus. So I walk down my lane, for instance. I can't go there because the carport is closed. The carport is closed. The carport is closed. The carport is closed. But I know when they're coming home because the car opens up, the car drives in, the door shuts, and there's no way of telling them about Jesus. There's no way to get into it. So what I did one time, I went to the city and I said, "I want speed bumps in my lane." You have to go house to house and get signatures. So I went house to house. I got everybody's name, I got everybody's address on our laneway on both sides, and I was able to meet the people. But unfortunately at the time—we're talking fifteen years ago—most of them didn't speak English, so I couldn't witness to them.

Three Reasons Christians Gather

But God is working through us. And today, today we will consider three basic reasons why Christians should meet together. It's so important. Don't give up meeting. I'm preaching to the choir, which means I'm preaching to people—you're here. God bless that you're here. But this message is to encourage you to carry on carrying on. This message is to spur you, to animate you, to continue what you're doing, and to invite others. To invite others.

Three things.

1. Fellowship: We Need One Another

First of all, fellowship: we meet one another. Fellowship: we meet one another. We've got to be together. In this world of individualism, these people come down into their homes, the door's shut, I can't get in. They've got their entertainment system, they've got their Wi-Fi, they've got their YouTube, they've got their sport, they've got everything. They don't need me. But I'm encouraging them, because we need each other. Don't ever, ever think you don't need your brother or sister in Christ. And that's why God saved us: to be together.

We gather together. We gather together. We grow together. It says in the Bible:

[2 Peter 3:18 NKJV] - but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

And that's what God wants you to do: grow. And how can we grow? We grow together. When I look up there and I think of different people there that helped me grow over the years, sure. But see, some of those people live way out there. Some of them people are old and they can't come, but they're part of our family. They're in the book. They're in the book, and use the book. I have it every year. I don't phone you all, I don't email you people, I don't bother you, I don't bug you, but I pray for you. And that's what we want to do for one another: to pray.

2. Remembering the Lord and Corporate Life

And the third thing, we meet together to remember Christ's return. What a feast we have! What a wonderful time. And I remember when we were going through the pandemic and I was home, and I was with you a few times, and it was sad, but it was still—we met together. We're going to see a picture of that pretty soon. It was sad, but, oh, what a wonderful privilege we have of meeting together.

Fellowship: we need one another. The Scripture tells us that. The Scripture says:

[Acts 2:42 NKJV] - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

And that's what we do here at 16th. We meet together for teaching: Family Bible Hour, Sunday school, Bible studies, weeknight meetings. We meet together and have fellowship. Oh, wonderful! I'm staying today. My wife says, "You'll be home right away?" I said, "No, I'm getting a free meal at 16th." When it's a free meal, I stay. You know what I mean? And the breaking of bread—that's exactly what we did. We broke bread, and that's biblical, and prayer. So congratulations for being here, and keep up being here.

The Bible also in the Old Testament:

[Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NKJV] - ⁹ Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

And that's what we're here for. We're here to help, to encourage one another, build one another up, to help one another. Good. Sure, we goof, and when you goof, you can exhort the person in love. I've been exhorted many times, because I've done a lot of stupid things in my life. And I've had the elders phone me; I've had the elders—they never emailed me because in those days I didn't have email; I would have got a lot of emails—but you know what I mean. And I never was upset, because they did it for God's glory.

One Body, Many Gifts

Yes, it's so important to be together and to worship together. Isn't it wonderful we can worship together, sing together? Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful time. Wonderful times in the things of the Lord. It says here:

[1 Corinthians 12:12-16 NKJV] - ¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

I mean, we're together. Do you know, I'm looking forward to the next meeting, because when our brother or sister play the piano or the organ—I mean, I'd love to go play the organ; I can't play the organ. And I think of those ladies downstairs, probably even now, probably listening, but they can't see it, but that's okay—they're preparing lunch for us. We all are part of the body. And you've got to find out what part of the body you can use for the edification, for the growing up of the church.

That's why we have the church. That's why we have the assembly. That's why we have a hall. That's why we have this place of worship: so we can exercise our gift. What's your gift? Look for your gift. I don't have that many gifts. I really don't. But the gifts I have, I try to use for His glory. To God be the glory, great things He has done! But He wants to work through His people, and you're one of His people. That's why you're here worshiping Him this morning. Amen.

And we could go on and on and on about the whole idea of the body, but time doesn't permit it. But it's important that each one of us do our part. Talk to Eric. Talk to Harold. Talk to your people here and say, "I want to help. Can I help? What can I do?"

You know, I saw a brother this morning vacuuming on the Lord's Day. It should have been done Saturday night—no, I'm only kidding; that's what the Sanhedrin would say! But this morning he was vacuuming, and then I saw him with a broom. Oh, God bless you, brother. I don't know who it was, but God bless you. Think what Roy does. He does. I mean, there's so many things to do in a local assembly. And it looks nice outside. I examined outside. I looked around. I walked around here. I walked down here. I looked here, I looked there. It looks nice. Your garden looks—everything. Keep up it. Don't give up. Don't give up. Please don't give up, for God's glory.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good works. Love. We've got to love. Love lifted me. If love lifted me, my love for Fulano, Mengano, Zutano, for Jones and the Joneses, and the Lees, and the Langs, and the Wongs—my love is there to build them up. I love you people. "Oh, come on, Ron. You're going to say you don't love me?" I love you because you're my brother and sister, whether you like it or not. I know I'm a loudmouth, but I love God's people. I'd do anything for you, twenty-four-seven.

I have my phone—thank you. This might be a nice color, eh? Young people love it. I have my phone beside my bed even at siesta time, and that's sacred. Well, that's not biblical, but it's a special time! But if you phone me and say, "Ron, I need a ride out to the airport," I take you out. My wife gets after me sometimes because maybe I'm too much that way. I mean, last night I had steak for dinner, but I put two racks of costilla ribs for somebody else. I was making a barbecue for myself, so I put on two racks for somebody. Not because I'm great,

no; not because I'm going to pat myself on my back, no; it's because God put that in me. That's one of my gifts. And we've got to use our gifts for His glory, because the Day is approaching and we need to be encouraged, we need to be built up.

And those times we spend together—I was here, and that was a couple of years ago, but it was wonderful. It was pouring rain, it was an ugly day, and we had to walk across that bridge. I was younger then; it was easier. But it's so important, these times that we can spend together and to encourage one another.

Holding Up Each Other's Hands

God never intended believers to live a Christian life alone. Spiritual growth happens best in community. Faith was never meant to be lived alone. There's no hermits—I think that's the word—in the Christian life. And we have examples, so many examples. I can't go over all the examples, but remember in the old times, held up his hand, the two brothers together, the two people, Moses and Aaron, and Hur held up his hand because they were together. They were working together. And sometimes your elders, and your deacons and deaconesses, and those working down in the kitchen, and those who are sweeping out the front, and those who are cutting the grass, and those who help plants—they need encouragement.

I love that picture of Moses and Aaron. When Moses became weary, Aaron and Hur held up his hands, and victory came. When God's people work together, victory! You want victory? Work together. And when you get tired, somebody will help you lift up your hands. It's so important, so important.

The early church is another great example of being together. The early church, we find over and over, there they were—they were together. It says in the Word of God that together, togetherness. That's why I like Latin America. I'm sorry, I love Latin America because we hug and kiss and hold hands! I can remember in Africa, six-foot-five African, black as an ace of spades. You know what we were doing? We were walking down in the camps; I was chewing on a piece of wood, so he gave it to me, and we're holding hands walking down. He's a Christian. I couldn't speak to him because he spoke Swahili and I only spoke French. But we walked down, and he's my brother in Christ. I've got a picture of it, and a big piece of wood hanging out of my mouth! I'd rather have a nice piece of licorice or something, but they don't have licorice there.

But it's the idea of being together, working together, encouraging. The believers met regularly for worship, prayer, fellowship, and breaking of bread. Their unity became a testimony to the world. People see us at Cascades Church now, and they see us—we've got I don't know how many different nationalities, and we're having a great time. I'm going there

tomorrow night; there's a free dinner for those that help. I don't preach there anymore, but once a month I'm at the door, so I get a free meal once every so often. But I'm looking forward to it, just to be with the saints, to be part of the church.

Practical, yes. Practical reasons: encouraging during difficult times. We're all going through difficult times. I'm sure a lot of you people up there in Zoom land—oh, they're not there now—but anyway, up in Zoom land, I'm sure they're going through problems. So send me an email, give me a "Hey, hi." Yesterday I got on the phone and I—because it's free now, when you use WhatsApp, it's free, so I use it, it's free—"Hey, how are you? ¡Ah, querido amigo!" I talked to him for twenty minutes, didn't cost me a penny, but I encouraged him. He said, "Wow, that's the first time you called me on the phone." I said sometimes text him, but I'm not good at texting. I'm old school. But you can do it. You can text that person. You can encourage them during difficult times.

Accountability for spiritual growth: How are you growing spiritually? Another fellow I phoned up, I wanted him to make me a pin like this, with ShareWord Global. His name is Brian Taylor. He's a jeweler, and he made my ring forty years ago. Forty years ago, yeah. Anyway, I phoned him up and I said, "Brian, how are you?" He said, "A voice from the past!" But we had a lovely time just encouraging him. I should have phoned more often, but just, you know, it's encouraging: "How are you doing? Where are you attending? How's it going?" Fellowship and support.

A Personal Challenge

These are reasons: opportunities to serve others. Personal challenge: here's a challenge. Who needs your encouragement this week? Who needs your encouragement this week? Determine to be a blessing to another person. Don't just think about me: "Oh, it's Monday morning. I'm so tired. Oh, it was a long weekend. Oh, I can't do that." No, no, no. Take the phone, give somebody a phone call and encourage them: "I missed you on Sunday. I missed you on Sunday. Are you okay?" Not judgmental, not a guilt trip. When I was young, I was living a lot of times under a guilt trip. But today, let's not give them a guilt trip. Really, honestly, I don't know where everybody is. Maybe they heard I was speaking; maybe that's why there's not a full house today! But anyway, phone up the people that aren't here. Phone up the people that aren't here.

Colossians says:

[Colossians 3:16-17 NKJV] - ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Admonish. Build up. Encourage. You know:

[2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV] - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

And we are to share that Word to others. In Acts 20:32, it said:

[Acts 20:32 NKJV] - "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

"Brother, I've got a verse for you," and share that verse with them. I get them every day. I get them from three different things: one French, one English, one Spanish. And they encourage me. And a lot of times, it's just the verse I need. And sometimes I'll get a phone call from somebody and say, "Ron, God was speaking to me this morning and He gave me this verse." Thank you. That's what we should be doing for one another. It's so important.

Bible truth: God uses teaching and preaching of His Word to mature Christians. I want to be a mature Christian. I'm not totally mature yet. I make a lot of mistakes. I don't understand a lot of things. But as I listen to messages from preachers that I know—preachers like, I won't start naming them, but there's some really good ones out there. You've got to be careful, of course.

Then it says Jesus regularly taught in synagogues and gathered His disciples for instruction. So important. On the Sabbath, where was Jesus? Every Sabbath He was in the home, in the synagogue, teaching and preaching. You know Ezra—I mean, let's take Ezra in the Bible, in the Old Testament: read God's Word, the people assembled to hear God explained and revealed, and revival followed. Revival followed! That's why we meet together. I want to be

revived. I want to be—can I use a bad expression? I might not be invited back, but I want to get kicked in the butt! I think that's good. That's what I want. I need it, and I get it at church. Sometimes the people don't mean to do it, but it's God working through the message if somebody has preached, and, boom, I've got to change. And this is what we go to church for.

And as I said, I'm preaching to the choir. Time is just about gone. But you know what? Sound doctrine protects from error, and we get that in here at 16th. Keep coming. Bring your friends.

Corporate worship strengthens faith. Isn't it wonderful to be here and just to praise God, listen to the different voices, different accents, different verses, different interpretations? So good. Learn together. Learning together deepens understanding.

Yes, we all have gifts. I don't know why you've never asked me to sing a solo here; I'm disappointed. What do you look at me like that, Ken, for? You know how I sing, I think! See, I can't sing. They never ask me to sing. But I'm part of the body, though I can't do what our brother is doing here. I love him. And there's another fellow, two or three come up here, and Harold and others, and it's wonderful. They're using their gifts. And spiritual gifts develop through ministry. And as you come, people will see spiritual gifts in you—those who play the piano, those other things.

It's so important to come together. Come to church expecting God to teach you something every time. That's why I go to church. I need church. I don't understand why some of my friends my age aren't going to church anymore. But the Word of God shows us very distinctly: God works through the church.

[Revelation 22:20 NKJV] - He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

I mean, so important. And as I come in, I see these two kids here—excuse me for using you as an example, I'm sorry—but beautiful. Oh, yeah, he's like that; he says, "That's me! That's me!" But isn't it wonderful? So, I mean, we can't get down like I used to. I can't get down anymore. I used to get down like this and put my arm around kids and say, "I love you." You know, you can't do that anymore. But you can say, "Hi, how are you? Good morning. It's nice to see you."

The local church, the local assembly. There are many other things we could say, but I hope this has been a stimulation. I hope this has been an encouragement. Because, you know, when we go through it, we have so many examples: feasts in the Bible, we have the Lord's

Supper. And remember this? Oh, this was so sad. So sad. That's during the pandemic. But look at now: we can come together. Let's profit by coming together. Let's profit by helping one another. Let's profit by encouraging one another.

Heavenly Father, we thank You once again for 16th. We thank You, Heavenly Father, for what it means to me personally, but even so much more for what it means to each person in the pews this morning and those on Zoom. Help us to appreciate what You've given to us. Help us not to take it for granted. Help us to work, for the night is coming when we won't be able to work. Use us in Your kingdom, for Your kingdom. And thank You for all those people here at 16th that are working for You in one way or another. And we'll give You the praise and glory in Jesus' name. Amen.