

# WEEKLY REFLECTION

It is hard to love. We know this. Loving and looking beyond oneself is so antithetical to who we are, to what the world calls us to be, that we cannot hope to do it on our own. And yet, Scripture tells us we cannot flourish without human community. The Greatest Commandment compels us to love God with all our heart, soul and mind... Yet equally as important is the call to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:36-40)

This week's passage of Hebrews 10:24-25 gives us encouragement for how we can do this, and why we should be doing this. Though the Mosaic law provided the Israelites with a system of sacrifices and offerings to atone for their sin, it would never be enough. (Heb. 10:11) Even the offerings themselves would serve as a reminder of the people's sin that could never be fully wiped away. (v.3-4) But Christ, in His death upon the cross, acted as the perfect sacrifice to offer whole and complete forgiveness for all sin. (v.12-18) It is through His death for us and His gift of His Holy Spirit to us that we are fully reconciled to God, no longer slaves to sin but able to walk according to the ways and standards He has called us to.

We know that sin only leads to death (Rom. 6:23; Jas. 1:13-15) and separation between man and God. We serve and follow a holy God who cannot tolerate sin, which is why the author of Hebrews urges the early church to consider how they can keep the habit of meeting continually, how they can stir each other up to love and good works. (Heb. 10:24-25) The day is drawing near, where each will be judged according to his deeds. (2 Cor. 5:10) As we gather, let us consider how we can encourage, edify, and exhort each other, knowing that we are called to love God, His Church, and His world.

# QUESTIONS

## **QUESTION ONE:**

Who are the five people that you spend the most time with? What is a habit, word or phrase, or practice that you've (whether consciously or unconsciously) picked up from them?

## **QUESTION TWO:**

What differentiates your group from a club or an interest group? What are the specific things that your group does to mark yourselves as part of a Christ-following community? How does this compare to the vision laid out in Acts 2:42-47 and Hebrews 10:24-25?

## **QUESTION THREE:**

Consider the three Es: encouragement, edification, and exhortation. We need a good balance and mixture of the three if we are to stir each other up to love and good works, knowing that the day is coming when Jesus will return for good.

Out of the three, what is your group strongest in? What do you practice the most? What can your group grow in? What do you practice the least?

Can you take some time now to encourage, edify, and exhort one another in terms of your spiritual walk with Christ, setting the tone for the year ahead?