

An Encouragement to Others
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In a world filled with so many discouraging situations, we are called by God to be an encouragement to others, especially in the church. That's why Paul wrote letters to the churches. It was hard to follow Jesus. They needed to know people loved them and wanted to see them carry on in the faith. Here's an example from 1 Thessalonians 5:11:

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing."

There are many ways that we can build each other up. Here are just a few:

Listen, Listen and Listen

We live in such a fast-paced world that we convince ourselves that we don't have time to hear about the problems of others. Honestly, we're so busy we don't have time to even hear our own problems! Something beautiful happens when we ask good questions and take the time to listen. We connect on a deeper level. We gain perspective on our struggles. We know better how to care. In fact, the person sharing may even understand his or her own struggles better because someone else took the time to listen. Some of the best "conversations" I've had in ministry were the ones where I said the least!

Pray... for Real

How is prayer an encouragement? So much of life is beyond our control. Prayer reaches out to the One who has control and seeks His will for our discouraging world. Confession time - How often do we say we will pray for someone and then never take the time to do so? Yes, we are supposed to pray continually, but I mean stopping what we are doing and praying for someone. I've caught myself saying I would pray for someone only to realize later that I never really did. I can't tell you how many times I have heard someone going through a very hard time say they "felt" the prayers of others. It was an encouragement.

Hope in Jesus

The best encouragement that we have is that we are saved by grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It's no surprise, Paul said the same thing to the Thessalonians.

We blessed to be a blessing! Be an encouragement!