PRACTICING A ONE ANOTHER CULTURE
Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Title: Jesus' Way of Encouragement
Date preached: November 8, 2026

Opening prayer: Our God, we pray that we may enter together into fellowship with you – Father, Son and Spirit – and as we experience fellowship with you, we may also develop fellowship with one another so that we might reflect the love and care for One Another that brings you honor and us joy. Amen (~John 17:20-22)

Opening question: How have the sermons: 'Speaking the Same Word Together' or the 'Requiem – The Call to Godly Rest' continued to impact your thinking and action?,

Sermon Focus: Mutual encouragement and building one another up are central to God's design for the Christian life as taught and practiced by Jesus. This week we focus on three of the many New Testament exhortations to encourage one another by coming alongside. The desired effect of this encouragement is not personal aggrandizement which devolves quickly into pride, but rather strengthening the community of believers so they may faithfully put God's word into action serving one another. The gospels cite many examples of this in Jesus' interaction with the disciples. In Acts, Barnabas (which means son of encouragement) acts as the go-between to introduce the skeptical apostles to Saul (later Paul), encouraging them to trust Saul's conversion. He later travels to Tarsus to summon a discouraged Paul, to come to Antioch where Paul and Barnabas would be commissioned as messengers of the good news to the Gentiles. Barnabas became Paul's trusted ministry partner during his first and second missionary journeys

Sermon Question:

- What part of the sermon has stayed with you since Sunday?
  OR What challenged, encouraged, or surprised you in the sermon?

Scripture reading: Hebrews 10:25; I Thessalonians 4:18 and 5:11

Optional expanded reading: Hebrews 10:19-25; Acts 9:26–30 and 11:19–30

Scripture Context: The book of Hebrews is, along with Romans, one of the most theologically dense letters in the New Testament. Although its authorship is uncertain, it is clearly a letter written in uncertain times – perhaps near or just after 70 A.D. – to a primarily Jewish audience who had come to faith in Jesus but were seemingly tempted to return to the traditions of the Old Covenant – following the Law of Moses. From the start where Jesus is described as 'the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of God's nature' (Hebrews 1:2) the author patiently

establishes the primacy and supremacy of Jesus as the fulfillment of the old covenant and the bearer of a new and superior covenant reliant on the shed blood of the perfect lamb of God who has ascended to become our perfect High Priest. In chapter 10 verse 19, the book shifts to encouraging and giving practical advice to believers. Hebrews 11 interrupts this advice with a side journey demonstrating that all those who had been justified by God, even Old Testament heroes like Moses and Abraham, were justified by faith in the promises of God, not by their actions. Chapter 12 through the conclusion of the book continues the encouragement for believers to hold fast to Jesus and develop together the body of Christ.

Word in focus: PARAKALEO *verb* **(**To Encourage) – *Greek*: παρακαλέω (para-ka-LEH-oh) To encourage, exhort or comfort. The word παρακαλέω is found in various cases and tenses over 100 times in the New Testament including in Hebrews 10:25 and I Thessalonians 4:18 and 5:11 which we are studying this week. Composed of two Greek roots PARA- which means close beside and -KALEO which means to call or beseech. A literal translation is to call closely alongside. When parakaleo is used in its noun form, it is the word used by Jesus (John 14-16) to describe the Holy Spirit – translated as comforter, advocate or helper.

Questions:

1. We are called to encourage one another in these verses. Why do we need encouragement? What gives you encouragement?

2. Read Hebrews 10:19-25. What are some ways we can come alongside one another?

3. Can you share about a time when you came alongside another believer or another believer came alongside you during a difficult challenge or to partner in ministry?

4. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. How are we to encourage one another?

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11. What are we building on as we build each other up?

6. Look again at Hebrews 10:23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17–18 and 5:9–10. What do these verses say about who God is and what he has promised? How can these truths shape what we say when we encourage one another?

Sharing life together: Who in your life needs encouragement? What is one way you can encourage them this week? Where do you need encouragement? Who in your life do you turn to when you need a boost of encouragement?

Closing prayer: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)