

# Bible Studies for Life: February 23

*The Gathering for Worship • Hebrews 10:19-25; 13:12-15*

*By Sydney Charlton*



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Sadly, we are still recovering from the cultural norm created from the days of streaming church services online during the

COVID-19 pandemic. People became comfortable half-heartedly participating in worship services from their living rooms. Efforts became minimal then, which caused many to feel permitted to neglect to gather together now. While online services are a wonderful option for individuals unable to attend gatherings in person, these services are a poor substitute for physically gathering with others for corporate prayer and worship.

There is something extremely special about worshipping with others who are of various ages and in different stages of life. Many who have walked through the difficulties we currently face can share encouragement for our situation, and we can do the same for others. As a Body of Believers, we need every person to function most effectively (1 Corinthians 12:12-27, ESV). God has gifted us all in unique ways to work together in ways that make the most impact for His Kingdom!

Hebrews 11, the "Hall of Faith" chapter, falls in the middle of our passages for today. It's quite fitting! The unknown author of Hebrews shared names and circumstances of many men and women of the faith who have been in Glory for quite some time to serve as a reminder to us: our hardships and triumphs may be new to us, but they are very familiar to God. He was faithful then, and He is faithful now! By reading and studying the faithfulness and endurance of the saints listed in Hebrews, and by getting to know fellow church members and learning these attributes in their lives, we find great strength and encouragement.

Gathering together to worship God motivates us to continue running this race well (2 Timothy 4:7, ESV)!

### **Hebrews 10:19-22**

Jesus made it possible for us to come to God. Pause and consider that fact for a minute. Our stony hearts have been made new because of the work Christ accomplished on our behalf

(Ezekiel 36:26-27, NIV). We were once separated from God because of our sin, but redemption has been made possible and now those in Christ are part of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9, ESV).

This assurance of faith and the redemption we have experienced makes corporate worship with other believers all the more profound. Sinners made right with God, are able to gather together to proclaim His goodness and faithfulness because we have experienced it for ourselves!

### **Hebrews 10:23-25**

The more we recognize our need for each other, the easier it is to “stir up one another to love and good works” as this passage instructs (v. 24, ESV). When we know others in our local church well, we become familiar with their hardships, things that bring them joy, and so on. We easily identify when a brother or sister in Christ needs encouragement, assistance, or someone to celebrate with them.

By choosing not to neglect gathering together, we publicly proclaim that we desire to remain united with fellow believers – walking with them in joy and triumph or in grief and sorrow. Choosing to remain faithful to God’s call to gather together strengthens our bond with one another and strengthens our individual walks with the Lord.

### **Hebrews 13:12-15**

Our faith is strengthened as we corporately look to Jesus and praise His name. There are days when we all need our perspective to shift. Life becomes difficult, and we begin to spiral into despair. Remaining committed to one another affords us the vulnerability to confess sins, remind one another of our call to live lives worthy, and rejoice together when obstacles are overcome (Ephesians 4:1, ESV). This leads us to greater unity when we praise the Lord together!

Gathering together for worship is a privilege many brothers and sisters around the world are unfamiliar with. Let us not take this gift and privilege for granted. God has blessed us with the local church and with one another so we may work together for His Kingdom's advancement and lift His name high in song and study of Scripture.

May our hearts align with David's, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Psalm 122:1, ESV)

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