

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:32; 2 Corinthians 1:4; Galatians 6:2-3

Introduction: Everybody, some more than others, needs to be encouraged, to have a "pat on the back" now and then. Who doesn't like to get a card, a hug, a handshake, a nod, a smile, a gift, a word of thanks, of gratitude, or just "that's the way to go..." Of all the people on earth who should be examples of encouraging one another, it ought to be US - God's Children, God's Family, Christians.

I. EVERYONE NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Do people tell you how wonderful you are everywhere you go?
2. When you go to work does everyone stop and cheer when you walk in?
3. When you arrive home does your family stand and applaud?
4. Do your children carry pictures of you in their wallets and purses and show them to everyone, bragging on how wonderful you are?
5. Do you get so much encouragement that you have to get away from it all and as you drive away a policeman pulls you over and tells you that you are driving so well that he wants to reward you with a fifty dollar bill?
6. No matter how well or how poorly you are doing, no one suffers from too much encouragement.
 - A traveling salesman went into a restaurant, ordered breakfast and asked for burnt toast, watered down scrambled eggs, half-cooked bacon, weak, cold coffee and then asked the waitress to sit down across from him while he ate and nag him. He said he was very homesick and he needed some encouragement. Even that kind.

II. WE NEED ENCOURAGEMENT EVEN WHEN WE DON'T DESERVE IT

1. In the play, "A Raisin in the Sun," there is a scene where Walter has lost all of the family's savings. Beneatha, the sister, is so disgusted with her brother that she said, "there's nothing left to love." Mamma holds her by the shoulders, looks her right in the eyes and says, "child, when do you think is the right time to love somebody the most - when they've done gone and made things easy for everybody? Well, you aint through learning yet - cause that aint the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in himself cause the world done whipped him so."

III. NOT GIVING UP ON PEOPLE KEEPS THEM FROM GIVING UP ON THEMSELVES

1. Jackie Robinson was the first African-American baseball player to make it in the Big :League. People would yell insults and racial slurs at him constantly. During a break in the inning Pee Wee Reese, the famous Dodger shortstop walked out on the field, put his arm around Jackie Robinson and just stood there beside him for the whole world to see. From that moment on, Jackie Robinson was a changed man and the rest is history.

2. In the Smithsonian Institute some of the personal effects of President Lincoln which were in his pockets the night he was killed are on display: a small pocket knife, a case for his glasses held together by a piece of string, a confederate five dollar bill, and a worn out newspaper clipping which extolled the accomplishments of President Lincoln. Was the president being vain? NO, he needed something to remind him that somebody believed in him.

IV. OF ALL PEOPLE WHO ENCOURAGE OTHERS, IT SHOULD BE CHRISTIANS

1. The Church is not a charitable organization like the Salvation Army or the Red Cross or any of the Rotary or Kiwanas clubs. The Church is a FAMILY
2. God has made it very clear that His Family is to take care of each other:
 - by love - *John 13:34-35*
 - by kindness - *Ephesians 4:32*
 - by comforting - *2 Corinthians 1:4*
 - by bearing one another's burdens - *Galatians 6:2-3*
3. Christians are not immune from difficulties:
 - they have burdens.
 - they are not to carry their burdens all alone.
 - they are to bear one another's burdens.
 - it is a command from God, not an option to encourage one another.
4. How can Christians encourage one another?
 - Paul's greatest comfort while in prison was a companion, a friend who stayed with him and the messages from his friends in other places.
 - Stand beside a brother or sister who needs to be encouraged.
 - Send a letter, make a phone call, or email.
 - Take a gift to that person.
 - Say encouraging things to them and about them to others.
5. Have you ever been encouraged? Then go and do the same to somebody who needs lifting up.
6. When we love one another, we are kind to one another, when we comfort one another, when we stand beside one another, encouraging each other with our love, presence and kind words,
we are fulfilling Christ's commandment and showing openly that we are truly a part of His wonderful Family - we are being Christ-like.

CONCLUSION:

- How do you know if someone needs encouraging? If they are breathing, they need encouraging.
- Even if they don't seem to deserve it, it will help keep them from giving up on themselves.