

Encouragement January 24, 2021 Discussion Notes

Everyone is encouraged to bring a Bible

(Phone apps are good for reading together in the same translation. Study Bibles give help with interpretation.)



Questions:

1. Has someone in your life been a big encouragement to you? How did they encourage you and how did that impact you?
2. The sermon examined the importance of encouraging one another in the life of the church. Review the points in the outline above. What stood out? Do you have any questions?
3. Read Acts 4:36-37 and Acts 9:23-27.
 - a) Why do you think that Joseph was nicknamed Barnabas?
 - b) How important do you think the gift of encouragement is?
 - c) How much of a “Barnabas” do you think you are?
 - d) What do you think would have to change in your life for you to become known as a son or daughter of encouragement?
 - e) In Hebrew, Barnabas literally means “son of prophecy” (*bar* = son, and *nabas* = prophecy), yet Acts 4 translates it “son of encouragement”. Why do you think the early Christians associated prophecy with encouragement?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5
 - a) According to this passage, how much desire should Christians have for spiritual gifts?
 - b) Which gift should be most desired and why?
 - c) What does the proper use of prophecy accomplish in people’s lives? (v. 3)
 - d) How might prophecy be used practically to encourage people? (see Ezra 5:1-2 and Ezra 6:14)
 - e) Do you “eagerly desire” the gift of prophecy? Why or why not? (Note: prophecy in the New Testament is speech or other communication that is inspired by the Holy Spirit for the encouragement and building up of others).
5. Read 1 Samuel 23:14-18
 - a) Why was Saul unable to catch David?
 - b) What did Jonathan do for David?
 - c) What did the two friends do before they parted ways?
 - d) What are some of the ways that Christians today can help one another “find strength in God”?
 - e) What might this look like during a pandemic?
 - f) What might this look like once the pandemic ends?
 - g) Who can you think of that might need encouragement right now? Would you be willing to pray for the Holy Spirit’s help in knowing how to reach out and what to say?
6. Have you been discouraged? If so, begin to pray that God would bring a “Barnabas” to you. And pray that more Barnabases would be raised up in the church.
7. Pray together for any needs you have. Pray that God would give you passion and power to be an encourager. Pray that our church would be full of encouragement. And pray for anyone feeling discouraged.