

JANUARY 25, 2024 THURSDAY - DAY 18

PRAY THAT WE WOULD EDIFY ONE ANOTHER

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

At the Pacific Ocean Studios on Clement Street in San Francisco, there is a pipe organ called the Chamberlain Music Master. What is distinctive about this organ is that there is a special button that, when pushed, offers a round of concert hall sized applause. You can play anything, press the button, and get a virtual standing ovation. Who would not enjoy the affirmation of a standing ovation to life's experiences? It's hard to function, especially in the body of Christ without the encouragement of others.

BUILDING UP CHARACTER

The earlier Greek verb in this verse renders the same Greek verb as the word "comfort" in 1 Thessalonians 4:18. Then Paul used another Greek verb, translated "edify" which means applaud/build up/ encourage. The readers were not being asked to do something new. Paul mentions that this comforting and edifying is something "you also are doing." This, then, is an encouragement to continue what they have already been practicing. This verb and its corresponding noun (edification) occur more than twenty five times in the New Testament, usually in the writings of Paul. Paul uses it each time in a social context, referring to interpersonal relationships within the church and the growth of the body.

To edify one another, as Paul here uses the word, means to assist another in the building up of character. Various philosophers and theologians have used the terms "basement people" and "balcony people" to describe the two types of people in our lives.

Basement people control us. They say things like: "You can't do that" "That's a stupid thing to do" "When will you ever get it right?" They divert our hopes and dreams by constantly pointing out the negative things in our lives. They cause the room to light up when they leave.



Balcony people are full of love and cheer us on to be loving and courageous when we are tempted to give up. They sit in the balcony of our lives and cheer us on. They say things like: "You can do it" "Go for it" "Seize the moment." We are called to be balcony people who encourage one another. Our hero in this activity is Barnabas. His name means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36). Barnabas stood up for Paul when no one else did (Acts 9:26 - 31). He stood up for Mark when Paul did not. Would you like to be an encourager in your church or fellowship group? Here are some practical suggestions for encouragement:

- Be vocal in encouraging other
- Affirm others for who they are, not for who you want them to be
- Allow others to be your balcony people
- Encourage those who are overlooked by others.

NECESSITY OF ENCOURAGING

One of the business marvels of the past twenty five years has been the rise and dominance of Wal Mart stores as America's number one retailer. One of the essential secrets of Wal Mart's growth has been its policy and practice of friendly management. There is a grandpa or grandma like greeter at every front door with a smile and an offer to help. There is the "ten foot policy," which requires every employee who comes within ten feet of a customer to smile, greet, and offer assistance. Every employee, from the late Sam Walton himself to the stock boy, is on a first name basis. Wal Mart realizes the necessity of encouraging one another. Wes Seeliger writes, "Ever feel like a frog? Frogs feel slow, low, ugly, puffy, drooped, pooped. The Frog feeling comes when you want to be bright but feel dull; when you want to share, but feel selfish; you want to be thankful, but feel resentment; you want to be big, but you are small; you want to care, but you are indifferent.

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We've all had times when we felt like a frog floating on a lily pad down the great river of life, Too froggish to budge. Once upon a time, there was a frog. But he really wasn't a frog. He was a prince who looked and felt like a frog. A wicked witch had cast a spell on him. Only the kiss of a beautiful young maiden could save him. So he sat an un-kissed prince in frog form.

But miracles happen. One day a beautiful maiden grabbed him up and gave him a big smack. Crash! Boom! Zap! There he was a handsome prince. And you know the rest of the story. They lived happily ever after. So what is the task of the church? To kiss frogs, of course!"

Pray that we would edify and encourage one another.

**Therefor comfort each other
and edify one another,
just as you also are doing.
1 Thess. 5:11**

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Ask God to open your eyes to church member and Christian friends who could use a word of encouragement.
2. Send birthday cards to the senior adults in your congregation. Perhaps the church secretary or senior minister can get the information for you.
3. Seek to be a Barnabas ("Son of encouragement"), trying to compliment and affirm at least one person every day.
4. Find someone who can be an encourager to you, and allow them to build you up in the faith.



**If the church is anything at all,
it should be stimulating never boring.**

**The common term "Inactive church member"
is an oxymoron, internally contradictory;
like a blazing snowball, or a square circle.**