

Encouragement & Moral Support

"Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other."

Romans 12:9-10

Opening Prayer

Check-In (Share an important or interesting thing from this past week.)

Exploring Encouragement & Moral Support

In **Romans 12:9-10**, Paul reminds us not to pretend, but to love and care for each other as if we are actual members of the same healthy family. (What does the term "healthy family" mean to you? What does this have to do with moral support? How do we honor each other?)

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." **Ephesians 4:31-32**

(Unfortunately, one of the places where the unhealthy practices cited above are often found is the church congregation. How can we make sure that we practice kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness rather than anger, and slander at SMM?)

"So encourage each other and build each other up..." **1 Thessalonians 5:11** (How can we build up our fellow SMM members and attendees?)

From the **Book of Common Prayer**: "Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?" **BCP p. 303 Holy Baptism** (What are we doing to support the newly baptized, confirmed and received? Are there other things we could be doing as a congregation?)

"Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important." **Galatians 6:2-3** (Let's take time to listen to each other...really listen, especially when the person is burdened. Tell a story about providing encouragement to someone, and how that helped them. Did it help you? Tell about someone providing encouragement to you.)

"This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: 'Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another.'" **Zechariah 7:9** (Others are in need of mercy and caring. What are some benefits of moving beyond our own thoughts and concerns?)

Closing Observations

Closing Prayer

All Bible quotes are from the New Living Translation.