

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

9-11 God didn't set us up for an angry rejection but for salvation by our Master, Jesus Christ. He died for us, a death that triggered life. Whether we're awake with the living or asleep with the dead, we're alive with him! So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you're already doing this; just keep on doing it."

A Native American teaching, "Walk only as fast as the last one, if you want to walk far, walk together"

- The Native American teaching mentioned above, echoes St. Paul's letter. What does this mean? We live in a world which often feels fragmented and hurried. There are times when we aren't seen and there are times when people around us feel as though they are not seen. St. Paul reminds us "God didn't set us up for an angry rejection but for salvation through our Master, Jesus Christ. "Jesus died for us, a death that invites us into eternal life." Whether we're awake with the living or asleep with the dead, we're alive in him! So, help those who feel they are unseen; speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you will all be together in this—no one left out, no one left behind. " This vision of community is rooted in encouragement, hope, and togetherness. "For the Native Americans it's a part of their heritage, as indigenous people, to ensure that "no one is left out, no one left behind"—it's a challenge and a promise for every group, congregation, or neighborhood."

The Roots and Richness of Community

Your personal resources echo this theme. In *12 Keys for Effective Living community.docx*, Dr. Kennon Callahan writes, "We are at our best, when in difficult times, we have community." Community gives us roots, a sense of place, belonging, and family—even our friends or the newly met stranger may become our chosen family. "When we gather as a new family, in the presence of God; we experience the feelings of roots, a place to rest, a belonging to family and friends. We discover sharing and caring, reconciliation and wholeness, openness and community. "With the amazing richness of this community, we become our truest, best selves."

Martin Luther's Wisdom on Community

Martin Luther, the great reformer, understood the power and necessity of living together in faith. Here are a few of his most inspiring thoughts:

- **"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."** Luther's words remind us that hope and perseverance are essential, even in uncertain times. Investing in our lives and our community is an act of faith and resilience.
- **"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none."** Luther believed that spiritual freedom empowers us to promote justice and equality. In community, we celebrate our rights and dignity, standing firm together.
- **"You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say."** Community thrives when we speak up for one another, sharing our burdens, and refusing to let silence and/or negativity divide us.
- **"Here I stand, I can do no other."** : "Luther's conviction reminds us to live authentically and courageously, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and supporting one another."

To live in community is to embrace both the joys and the sorrows of togetherness. It means sharing encouragement, building hope, and ensuring that everyone finds they belong, not because they deserve it rather

because God makes it possible. As Paul urges, “Speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you’ll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind.”

Let us take inspiration from Martin Luther’s steadfast hope and commitment, planting seeds of kindness and faith even when the future is uncertain. Let us be responsible for one another, speaking truth and love, and standing together—so that our community becomes a sanctuary of wholeness, healing, and joy.

God speaks; Will you go where I send you?

Peace,

Pastor Christi