



“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

— HEBREWS 13:16

The New Testament book of Hebrews is a document fraught with mystery. Over the centuries, there has been considerable debate about who wrote it, to whom it was written, when it was written and what were the circumstances behind its writing. It is a text swirling in a conundrum of biblical scholarship.

Despite this, there is much to be gained by a careful study of this first century writing. Many modern scholars are convinced that, instead of a letter, Hebrews is a sermon. Likely preached to a first century congregation weary from the grind of doing faithful ministry in a secular society. As the renown preacher Thomas Long suggests, “the threat to this congregation is not that they are charging off in the wrong direction; they do not have enough energy to charge off in any direction.” To these people (and to us), speak the words of Hebrews.

In many ways, the modern church is also weary from the grind of doing faithful ministry in a secular society. The population of our church roles has been on the decline for decades. The resources available to the church have seen an alarming downturn. The voice of the Gospel has been diluted by the chaotic noise of our materialistic culture. And yet, the needs of the world continue to swell. Within this imbalance, many in the church have become weary.

However, the words of Hebrews ring even louder today than they did when they were first written. In this world where suffering and anguish have become so prevalent, we must not neglect doing good and sharing what we have. But instead of working harder, we must work smarter. That is where a partnership with Church World Service makes sense. Working together, Church World Service and local congregations send cleanup buckets to communities wracked by hurricanes, school kits to districts swirling in poverty, period packs to women hiding in domestic violence shelters and hygiene kits to refugees seeking asylum from tyrannical regimes. As we work cooperatively instead of individually, not only are our efforts compounded and maximized, but the relationship among God’s people is nurtured. To work together to serve others is to work together to serve God. And, as the scripture reports, such sacrifices are pleasing to God.



SMALL GROUP DEVOTIONAL : CWS KITS

Topics for conversation:

- Discuss the challenges that the modern church faces in doing good.
- Discuss ways that collaborative ministry nurtures the relationship among God's people.
- Speculate on how the kits we are packing today might be used and the response of the people who receive them.
- Consider and discuss why you believe such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Let us pray...

Holy God, you have called us to serve the least of these. You have called us to do good that others might know of your healing and reconciling love. And yet, the task is so hard and the challenges so overwhelming that sometimes we have found it easier to give up than to press forward. As we pack these kits today, spark within us a renewed passion for service. Make us conduits of your mercy that our deeds would reflect your goodness and bring hope and healing to a broken world. Amen.