

Exhortation Defined:

The word "exhort" or "exhortation" means: to beseech, to call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhortation), entreat, pray (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #G3870*). Basically, to exhort is to admonish or encourage.

Hebrews 10:24-25—We are NOT to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but are to exhort/encourage each other daily—stirring each other up, to love and good works.

How do we encourage and stir each other up? We help focus each other on *our vision* – the coming Kingdom of God! We help each other become more Christ-like and better servant-leaders.

This, too, is a major responsibility of godly leaders—owning the vision of the kingdom and helping God's people prepare for that kingdom.

"We must attract people to a gripping dream, not a grinding job."
Lawrence, B. (1999). *Effective Pastoring* (pp. 35-42). USA: Word Publishing.

A. The Vision of God's Church

Why do so many Churches today lack the unifying biblical vision that drives them into the future, and in this life, toward much greater accomplishment? Most people in this world, including so-called Christians, are deceived (Rev. 12:9) and have not been called to understand God's plan. For this reason, they are not driven forward by His vision—a vision that He shares with us. In fact, we are told that "where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Prov 29:18). When people have no convicting or convincing hope for the future, they, in time, lose their focus and **motivation**.

What is our vision? It involves Christ's imminent return to this earth in the clouds, at the sound of the seventh and last trumpet. It involves the change of mortal human beings (both dead and alive at His return) into spirit beings and members of God's spirit family (1 Cor 15:50-58; 1 Thes 4:13-18). It involves developing the mind and character of Christ so that we can rule with Him for one thousand years and beyond (Rev 5:10; Rev 20:4-6). It points us to Christ's millennial rule after replacing Satan the Devil. And ultimately, Satan's influence will no longer permeate the earth for the first time in 6,000 years (Rev 20:1-3). God gives this awesome vision to all of those He has called.

1 Thes 5:8—"... putting on... as a helmet the hope of salvation"

- Paul refers to our "Hope of Salvation" as a helmet—a defensive weapon that protects our mind. Our hope and vision drive us forward and give us self-control and peace of mind.

Rom 8:18-19—In the Apostle Paul's view, compared with God's Kingdom and our calling, the trials we experience today really do appear less important. They become insignificant when compared with what we are called to do and to become!

"This amazing vision of the Kingdom of God was the driving force in the expansion of Christianity during the early centuries of the Church—before misguided teachers began to lose the vision and turn aside to another gospel" to
Winnail, D.S. (Jan.-Feb. 2003). *Living Church News* (p. 8).

B. Leaders and Vision

"The intensity of a vision combined with the magnetic pull of commitment makes it the fire of leadership. Vision is what ignites people's interest in following a leader" (Lawrence, B. (1999). *Effective Pastoring* (p. 154-55). USA: Word Publishing).

Hebrews 11:13—We are told that all the saints or leaders (mentioned earlier in the chapter) died in the faith, not having received the promises, but did see them far off—The Kingdom of God and the opportunity to rule there with Christ.