

# *Equipping The Saints*

*"...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." ~ Ephesians 4:12*

January 3, 2016

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## **“The Lord... Sent Them in Pairs” Companionship in the Work of the Lord (By Andrew Dow)**

The beginning of God’s Word tells us of the creation of man and his perfect companion, woman. God said, **“It is not good for the man to be alone”** (Gen. 2:18). From the beginning of time God recognized that man needs companionship. Companionship was not just desirable, it was a desperate need. In fact, the need was so enormous that the Lord went to great lengths to make sure man had a suitable companion.

God always intended companionship. When God recreated the human race through Noah, He made certain that Noah and his sons entered the ark, along with **“Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons”** (Gen. 7:13). We teach our children that the animals boarded the ark **“by twos”** (Gen. 7:15). Companionship, however, is not limited to the sexual relationship. Scripture shows that companionship is also important in the Lord’s work.

### **Examples of Companionship in the Lord’s Work**

Companionship played a major role in spreading the gospel in the first century. Mark records a time when Jesus **“summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs...”** (Mark 6:7; cf. Matt. 10:5-15; Luke 9:1-11). Christ sent them apostles out to **“proclaim the kingdom of God”** (Luke 9:2). All they were given for their journey was a companion (cf. Luke 9:3).

Luke records another instance in which **“the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come”** (Luke 10:1). Jesus said to these men, **“Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves”** (Luke 10:3). Again, Jesus instructed them not to carry provisions with them, but to rely on what would be given to them (Luke 10:4-8). One of the few things they were allowed to take was a companion.

After Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection we find no such command to travel in pairs (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). However, notice that Jesus’ disciples continued the trend of doing the work of the Lord with a companion. For instance, after the events of Pentecost, we find Peter and John working together (Acts 3:1, 3, 4, 11; 4:3, 13, 19). The church of Antioch provides an example of five individuals working **“ministering to the Lord”** with one church (Acts 13:1-2). How wonderful a situation in which five companions were able to work together to spread the gospel in one area! Paul always seems to be found traveling with a companion, or waiting for a companion! In the book of Acts he spends extensive time working with Barnabas (Acts 13-15) and Silas (Acts 15:40; 16-18). Additionally, Paul’s companionship with Timothy and Titus becomes evident by reading his epistles to them. Paul was rarely without a “fellow worker,” and often with many companions.

### **Some Points of Application**

It is significant that God in the beginning of time, Jesus before His crucifixion, and the disciples during the early days of the church all recognized the importance of companionship. They recognized that working in groups of two or more was valuable in light of the difficult work at hand. How should this knowledge affect the way we work in the Lord’s kingdom?

**First, we need to work with each other.** Some brethren have the mindset that we “**encouraging one another**” (Heb. 10:24-25) when we worship, but then we’re on our own for the rest of the week. This is wrong and dangerous! Perhaps it stems from a belief that designated worship times are the only way in which we serve the Lord. Do we truly believe that the Lord’s work is our work, or do we feel that it is only the work of the preachers and elders? Recognize that these things are YOUR responsibility, and then work together to do the work of the Lord.

**Second, we need to accept the help of others.** Have you ever seen a strong Christian fall into sin? Maybe it was an elder, a preacher, or a well respected man or woman. Too often Christians refuse to ask for the help (i.e., companionship) that they truly need. God’s people were never meant to be lone wolves. God’s people are expected to be a family (Eph. 2:19). How can we be a family if we never allow others to be our companions.

**Finally, we need to work together to save souls.** It is true that local congregations often support a man to be their “*evangelist*,” but that does not remove the local church’s responsibility to save souls (Matt. 28:18-20). Perhaps one reason we don’t teach the lost is that we fear the uncomfortable “*one on one*” situation. If you think evangelism is something you have to do alone, read the book of Acts. God’s people rarely worked alone! There is no need to work alone; find a companion!

To sum up, the preacher accurately wrote, “**Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. ... And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart**” (Eccl. 4:9-12).

# 9 Ways To Be Evangelistic Without Being The Teacher

(By Berry Kercheville)

**1. Can You Make New Friends and Invite?** Jesus told his disciples, “**Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.**” The need is to be able to open our eyes and *see*. Opportunities are all around us. Even though some people are far better at developing new relationships, the real “*gift*” is taking the time to do so. In every church there are people who have outgoing personalities. It seems they never meet a stranger. Others, must push themselves to make deeper connections with those who do not know God. But the challenge for those so gifted is whether it is being used for the kingdom or simply for personal success. Meeting new people and developing relationships, takes time, effort, and money. It means being purposeful about why God has placed a particular person in our life. God has given this gift and opportunity to many Christians. Who will step up and use their talent to fulfill this need?

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## Notes:

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### AM Lesson:

*The Importance of Questioning Beliefs*

### PM Lesson:

*What Can Kill A Church*