

12. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Team Work

Christ had many who followed Him, and even participated in ministry with Him. Luke 10:1 tells us, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” In this verse, we see that Christ sent out thirty-five teams to go before Him to each of the cities He would be visiting. Luke 10:2-12 shows us that Christ gave these teams very specific instructions before He sent them out to minister.

Luke 6:12-13 also tells us that Christ had a smaller team within the larger group of disciples. Those verses tell us, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” In these verses, we see that Christ chose this smaller team after spending an entire night in prayer.

Mark 3:13-15 tells us why Christ chose this smaller team. Those verses tell us, “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.” In these verses, we see that the first reason why Christ chose the twelve was so that they could be with Him. These men had already spent about twenty-one months traveling with Christ to various places. However, Christ was now choosing them to spend even more time with Him. Later, He would send them out to preach and minister with power. Christ chose this team to be with Him for at least four reasons:

- ◆ Christ chose to work through people
- ◆ Christ chose the people through whom He would work
- ◆ Christ chose to spend much time with His team
- ◆ Christ chose to train His team by example

First, Christ chose to work through people. Christ has the power to cause all of the people in the world to hear Him directly at the same time since He is the One who created the universe. He could have done the entire ministry Himself. Tragically, some Christian leaders miss this point, and try to do the entire ministry by themselves. Instead, Christ chose to work through people.

Second, Christ chose the people through whom He would work. Christ did not ask for volunteers among the larger group of disciples. Instead, as we saw in the second paragraph, Christ spent the entire night in prayer to the Father before choosing the twelve. In the same way, we need to be asking the Father whom we should choose to be a part of the team He gives us the opportunity to develop.

Third, Christ chose to spend much time with His team. During the first twenty-one months of His ministry, Christ spent large amounts of time with the multitudes and the larger group of disciples. Matthew 4:23 tells us, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” However, the crowds quickly thinned out when Christ began telling the requirements to

be His disciples. John 6:66-68 says, “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” As a result, Christ spent a larger and larger amount of time with just the twelve during the last twenty-one months of His earthly ministry.

Fourth, Christ chose to train His team by example. As we saw, in Mark 3:13, the first reason Christ chose the twelve was so they could be with Him. The result of the twelve spending time with Christ is clearly revealed in Acts 4:13. There we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” People who spend much time with us will also become what we are. That is why Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” We will transform others by spending much time with them if we are personally imitating Christ.

Since Christ chose a small team, and chose to spend the last half of His ministry developing and transforming that team, we also need to do the same thing, because that team will multiply our ministry. When choosing a team, Luke 6:12-13 shows that our basic responsibility must be to spend much time in prayer. We need to pray that the Lord will lead us to FAT (see below) people:

- ◆ **F** faithful – 1 Corinthians 4:2
- ◆ **A** available – Matthew 4:18-22
- ◆ **T** teachable – John 14:4, 8, 22
- ◆ with two basic attitudes:
- ◆ a learner’s attitude – Acts 9:5-6
- ◆ a servant’s heart – John 13:13-17

As Christ chose a team, He also gave them on-the-job training in teams. He later gave the teams the opportunity to report what they done and what they had taught. In Mark 6:7, Christ sent the twelve out in teams of two. He then gave them the opportunity to report what they had done and what they had taught. Mark 6:30 says, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.”

Because the apostles had been trained as a team, they also ministered as teams. In Acts 3:1-4:22, we see that Peter and John ministered as a team, both to a man who could not walk and also to the Jewish religious leaders. Later Acts 8:14 shows us that Peter and John ministered, as a team, to the Samaritans. That verse says, “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.”

In Acts 13:1-3, we see that the Holy Spirit also sent people out in teams. Those verses tell us, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.” In these verses, we notice two things

about team ministry. In Acts 13:1, we see that the Holy Spirit had developed a leadership team in Antioch that came from five different areas of the Roman world. Then, in Acts 13:2, we see that the Holy Spirit sent out a church planting team to take the Gospel to new areas.

Throughout his ministry, Paul continued to add additional people to that church planting team. We will mention just four illustrations. In Acts 15:40, Paul added Silas to the team. In Acts 16:1-3, Timothy was added to the team. Then, in Acts 16:8-10, Luke was added to the team (notice the change from “they” to “we” in verses eight and ten). In Acts 20:4, we see the team that traveled with Paul at a later time, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, we see that Christ calls us to work together as a team. In those verses, we see the following things about team ministry:

- the body of Christ has many members
- the parts of the body are each uniquely created by God
- the parts of the body all need each other
- the parts of the body least noticed are equally important
- the parts of the body are to care for one another
- the parts of the body are to suffer together
- the parts of the body are to rejoice together

In order to help Christians learn to function as a team, Christ gave all Christians spiritual gifts. Romans 12:3 says that God has given each of us a measure of faith. That verse says, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Verses 4 and 5 tell us that we are all dependent on one another. Then, verses 6-8 point out that each of us have been given different spiritual gifts. However, none of us have been given all of these gifts so that we will function as a body, not as isolated individuals.

1 Peter 4:10-11 tells us the purpose of those gifts. Those verses tell us, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, we see three key points about team ministry:

- ♦ these gifts are for the purpose of serving one another
- ♦ these gifts are given to us so that we can be good stewards
- ♦ these gifts are given because of the varieties of the grace of God

God has given us a great privilege to be His servants. We become servants who lead as we help others learn to work together as a team. The Lord will do much more than we can ever imagine through us, as we serve other Christians, by showing them how to function together as a team that focuses on bringing glory to God. May the Lord richly bless you, as you have the opportunity to

be a servant who leads other Christians, by showing them how to work together as a team to accomplish the work of the Lord.