

# SERVING TOGETHER

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Sermon Study Guide

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"Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose."  
- Philipians 2:2 NIV

"The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor." - I Corinthians 3:8 NLT

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A TEAM?

There's a wonderful story about Jimmy Durante, one of the great entertainers of a generation ago. He was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told them his schedule was very busy and he could afford only a few minutes, but if they wouldn't mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come. Of course, the show's director agreed happily. But when Jimmy got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on fifteen, twenty, then thirty minutes. Finally he took a last bow and left the stage. Backstage someone stopped him and said, "I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?" Jimmy answered, "I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you'll look down on the front row." In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that's exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.

Christianity is a team sport. Church is a team sport. We must learn how to function together if we are to accomplish what God has intended for us to do. There are certain things every team needs in order to succeed.

### 1. TRUST

Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find? -Proverbs 20:6 NIV

#### QUOTE:

*"Trust each other again and again. When the trust level gets high enough, people transcend apparent limits, discovering new and awesome abilities for which they were previously unaware."*

I remember taking my girls to the circus and seeing a man doing trick while riding on a horse. He blindfolded himself and the horse. Suddenly, he stood up on the horse and jumped through a ring of fire and then landed on the horse's back. Amazing! If you belong to Jesus Christ, you have been called to a similar arrangement - doing things you'd never otherwise be able to do because of a powerful two-way trust - you trusting God and God trusting you. In a very real way, everything that matters in your life is riding on your Lord. The size and sanity of your life depends on how much you're willing to trust God for, to hold you up when nothing else can, to steer you right when the way is confusing, to provide for you when you can't see where it's going to come from, and to equip you to do what you feel very inadequate to do. It's supposed to be all about Him, not all about you.

But you may not realize this surprising fact: God has a lot riding on you, too! See, He's entrusted you with gifts, with influence in people's lives, with money, with the message of His Son, and with a part of His work on earth. God's even trusted you with His reputation. By becoming a part of your life, He knows that people's opinion of Him may, in part, be based on what they see in you. Yes, you're not kidding. God has called you to trust Him. But don't forget that God is trusting you, as well.

This two-way trust is wonderfully expressed in 1 Peter 4:10-11, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." God has given you capabilities, personality,

opportunities, and spiritual gifts. All that's for you to use to hand out God's grace in people's lives. Now here's where your trust in Him comes in. The Bible says, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength the Lord provides." The words you need, the strength you need, everything you need to jump through hoops that you never could make it through without Him!

And this is all, according to this passage, "so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." Exciting things happening because you're trusting God and God's trusting you. Make sure you're using what He's given you for His glory, not for your own; for His goals, not your goals; for the good of others, not just for the good of yourself. When you've got it all riding on your Lord, using for His glory what He's got riding on you, you're going to do some amazing things together!

- By being CONSISTENT

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. - Luke 16:10 NIV

QUESTION:

1. Are you the kind of person that is consistent in your service to the church?
2. Can others count on you as much as you count on them?

- Being CONFIDENTIAL

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. - Proverbs 11:13 NIV

QUESTION:

1. Can you keep a secret?
2. When you keep the secret, what do you do with it? Pray? Worry? Judge?

- By Being CLOSE

Friends love through all kinds of weather, and families stick together in all kinds of trouble. - Proverbs 17:17 (Message)

QUESTION:

1. Who are you close to?
2. Are you only close to people during good times? What about the difficult times?

## 2. EMPATHY

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. - 1 Peter 3:8 NIV

The Bible contains many stories about compassion - the restoration of Job's family and possessions, healing's of all descriptions, and even the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

When you show compassion for someone you show pity and deep sympathy. God, our Father, has compassion on us. Were it not for God sending Jesus to die on a cross, we would be hopelessly lost and not know about His grace. As we (the children of God) are part of Him; we are the outward expressions of His Love. God wants His children to show compassion to others, especially those who are not saved.

Think of ways you could put compassion into practice. Do you have a friend who is going through some emotional trials right now? Let him/her know that you care for them and that you will gladly listen if they just need to talk. No judgment or advice need be given. Help a homeless person on the street by inviting them into your home for a meal

or to a nearby restaurant and buy them a meal. When you are finished eating tell them that God loves them and that you'll be praying for them. God wants us to Love the "unlovely".

We always say "I could help so and so and do such and such. But...I don't have time today. I'll do it next week." Don't wait. The time to show compassion is now!

**Zechariah 7:9 - This is what the LORD ALL-POWERFUL says: Do what is right and true. Be kind and merciful to each other**

- **SLOW DOWN**

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. - James 1:19 NIV

QUESTION:

1. Are you too "busy" to get into the lives of others?
2. Do you listen to what others are going through are do you just ignore them?

- **ASK QUESTIONS**

The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out. - Proverbs 20:5 NIV

QUESTION:

1. Do you know how to find out to help those in need?
2. What questions can you ask someone who appears to be hurting?

- **SHOW EMOTIONS**

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. - Romans 12:15 NIV

QUESTION:

1. Is it easier for you to rejoice or mourn with others?
2. Are you someone who shows emotions easily?

### 3. **ACCOMMODATE**

I Peter 3:8, 9

*Finally, all of you, be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brothers. Be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, returning blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you might inherit a blessing.*

The Bible talks often about the "one another" concept. Pray for one another, love one another, encourage one another, forgive one another. I Peter 3:8 & 9 is a good reminder that tells us that if we want to be blessed, we need to bless others as well. It's our calling. This is not really a conditional promise that says you must bless in order to be blessed. It's one of those natural consequences. When you are encouraging and blessing others, you are blessed in return.

I remember one day when my friend called and asked, "Are you going to be home for a little while?" I said yes, and he replied, "Good. I'm bringing you some deer meat." And he did. It was a blessing to me. Not only did he bring me some deer meat, he encouraged me in my Christian walk by sharing what the Lord was doing in his life that day. He prayed for me as well.

Why not think of some little things - or maybe even big things - you can do today to encourage someone you know? Write a note, call, say a kind word, or in some other way brighten someone's day.

- We have to accommodate each OTHER'S NEEDS  
Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. - Romans 15:2 (Message)

QUESTION:

1. Who do you know that needs to be "built up in the Lord"?
2. How can you build them up?

- Each other's IDEAS  
The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out. - Proverbs 18:15 LB

QUESTION:

1. Do you listen to other's ideas or do you just have your mind made up on how to do something?
2. Do you listen to what someone else has to say or do you just pick them apart or "shut them down"?

- Each other's PERSONALITIES  
We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. - Romans 12:6 NIV

QUESTION:

1. What gifts do the others in your small group have that you need?
2. What gifts does your mate have that you need?

- Each other's FAULTS  
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. - Ephesians 4:2 NIV

QUESTION:

1. How do you help others in their faults?
2. How can the faults of others help you with your own faults?

#### 4. MISSION

Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. - Philippians 2:2 NIV

In the same way that You gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world. I'm consecrating myself for their sakes so they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission" (John 17:18-19 MSG).

Any successful relationship is built upon the biblical truth that God designed each of us with five purposes in mind: worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and missions.

You and your spouse were both made for a mission. You and those in your Life Group were made for a mission together. Your relationships not only involves ministry, it also involves mission. Your ministry is to believers and your mission is to non-believers—allowing God to use your relationships as a means for telling others about his love.

This may take many forms, from being a witness in your neighborhood to going overseas on mission trips together. The fact is, if you want God's blessing on your marriage or Life Group relationships, then you must care about what God cares about most.

What is that? He wants his lost children found! He wants everyone to know him and his purposes for their lives.

Marriage is a life-long process designed to teach you to see the needs of another person as more important than your own. So are your Life Group relationships. Those are difficult transitions because they are not always natural. To think this way requires an intentional shift that can be made only through the power of God in your life.

The reward, however, is greater than anything you could ever imagine. God's plan for your relationships with believers is wider and deeper than anything in your wildest, craziest dreams.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. - Philippians 1:27 NIV

**QUESTION:**

1. Are you on mission in your Life Group?
2. Are you on mission in your marriage?
3. Who are you reaching for the Lord?
4. Who is on your Prayer Triplet Card?
5. What is your group doing to reach people?

The best illustration about teamwork that I've ever heard is one about geese. Geese find their way to a warmer climate, they often cover thousands of miles before reaching their destination. Have you ever studied why they fly as they do? It is fascinating to read what has been discovered about their flight pattern as well as their in-flight habits. There are four reasons why geese fly further, faster:

1. Those in front rotate their leadership. When one lead goose gets tired, it changes places with one in the wing of the V-formation and another flies point.
2. By flying as they do, the members of the flock create an upward air current for one another. Each flap of the wings literally creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. One author states that by flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets 71 percent greater flying range than if each goose flew on its own.
3. When one goose gets sick or wounded, two fall out of formation with it and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with the struggler until it's able to fly again.
4. The geese in the rear of the formation are the ones who do the honking. I suppose it's their way of announcing that they're following and that all is well. For sure, the repeated honks encourage those in front to stay at it. As I think about all this, one lesson stands out above all others: it is the natural instinct of geese to work together. Whether it's rotating, flapping, helping, or simply honking, the flock is in it together...which enables them to accomplish what they set out to do.

Look at each of these points and ask these questions:

1. What is the biggest factor of "teamwork" at work?
2. Which point(s) do you see illustrated in your Life Group?
3. Which point(s) do you need to work on as a Life Group?