

“The Body of Christ Walks and Works Together”

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God blesses his Church with workers with different gifts to work together for a common purpose, different parts but teammates with a united mission. So if “Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”, wouldn’t working together well not only be expected but the norm for every ministry team? Sadly, this isn’t always the case and if we are honest just the opposite happens all too often. So why is it that the relationships on some teams of called workers are barely surviving and not thriving? In this keynote, we will have an honest conversation about the issues that pastors and teachers face in their relationships, which if left unaddressed can hinder their joint ministry and mission. As we explore the challenges and discuss the blessings that come from being on a ministry team, we will discuss how workers in the Church can be a resilient team that works together, confronts each other well, communicates effectively with truth and grace, and resolves conflicts and tension in a healthy way so that all are blessed as the body of Christ works together.

Introduction

- Do you have any “off limit” topics? What makes it off limits?

Judging from the infrequency with which this subject is written and – publicly at least – spoken of in our circles, an innocent observer might naively conclude that the occasion for treating it arose so rarely that the question had no particular value. Anyone, however, who is at all familiar with life as it unfolds itself among us and with the problems that are created by our efforts to do the work of our Lord not only by preaching but also by teaching and doing this last adequately by means of full-time Christian schools, will suspect that there are other reasons why this subject is so carefully avoided.”

- Goals:
 - Have an honest conversation about walking and working together!
 - Open the Book!
 - Discuss the challenges!
 - Celebrate the blessings!
 - Explore how we can better walk and work together!
 - Personally
 - Practically
 - Conversation —> Action & Blessings

- Disclaimers, working assumptions & givens

Session #1 - "The Body of Christ Walks and Works Together"

Be Honest...

Why is this subject "so carefully avoided"?

Why are some teams of called workers barely surviving and not thriving?

What are the issues and challenges you have faced?

What would Jesus say is the real issue? Look at Matthew 7:24

Truth #1 - Walking & working together is **Biblical**.

- Ephesians 4:1-6,11-13 -

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-27 -

- 2 Chronicles 30:12 / Psalm 133 / John 17:20-24 -

- Case Study: The Early Christian Church (Book of Acts)

Points to Ponder & Next Steps

- 1) Ephesians 4:2 - Which one of those qualities could you use more of right now? Why? What's the WWTW?
- 2) Ephesians 4:3 - What is one practical way you can do this as a team?
- 3) 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 - Working and walking together shows concern for and celebrates the wins of other parts of the body? How can you do this better as you work and walk together on your team?
- 4) John 17 - Revisit the closing words of Jesus prayer on MT...what comfort do you find in those words when it comes to working and walking together? Why is a team that is walking and working together well so important and something to strive for?

TIME FOR QUESTIONS & BREAK

Session #2 - “The Body of Christ Walks and Works Together”

Be Honest...

How “healthy” are you?

Truth #2: Walking & working together requires personal **resilience**.

1) Spiritual:

- Galatians 5:19-25 -

2) Emotional:

“The small **cracks** you could manage before are being **pressurized** like never before.”

- Hebrews 13:5,6 / Romans 8:28 / Matthew 11:28 -
- Galatians 6:2a -

3) Physical:

- Some “A-Ha” Stats and Facts - Nutrition/Exercise/Rest
- Psalm 139:13-16 / 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 / 1 Corinthians 10:31 / 1 Timothy 4:8a -

There is no I in **team**, but there is in **resilience**!

Points to Ponder & Next Steps

- 1) Write down one thing you will do once you get home to provide for yourself better physical, emotional and spiritual health. (At least one for each category). Remember a failure to plan is a plan to fail!
- 2) Of the 3 legs of the resiliency stool, which is is the one you need to shore up - spiritual, physical, emotional? Why?
- 3) Who is one person on your team you can be open with on to help sharpen you? Write down their initials _____

TIME FOR QUESTIONS & BREAK

Session #3 - "The Body of Christ Walks and Works Together"

Be Honest...

"We know that men are troubled by shortcomings and failures, and therefore irritations are inevitable...The teacher may be looking for the perfect pastor, but there is no such thing. And the pastor may be looking for the perfect teacher, but there is no such thing. What, then, are the solutions, or what are some practical suggestions for the encouragement of harmony?"

Truth #3: Walking & working together takes **work**.

1) **Meetings** matter!

- Quote - "It has been my personal experience that the greatest strains in staff relations occur during times when access to each other has been reduced." (THE SHARED MINISTRY By Ronald K. Heins)
- Question: Are you meeting in a way that optimizes our working walking together to accomplish our mission and vision?

Do Work! Write down 1 change you will make/do in your ministry context and culture from a meeting standpoint to better work and walk together.

2) Play to your **strengths**!

- What are your Strengths?
- Why Strengths?

Do Work! What's your next step to be able to better play to your strengths and those of your team?

3) **Conflict** is necessary. (but needs to be **healthy**)

- Agree or Disagree: Jesus avoided tough conversations with people he interacted with
- Food for thought: Conflict & The Body of Christ

Do Work! (Action item): What 1 step will you take to promote more meaningful meetings with time and energy for productive conflict?

4) Ministry is **messy**. (Rapid Fire Q & A)

Q: Conflict is necessary but also challenging...so how does one confront a fellow called worker well?

Answers:

- 8th commandment it - **Believe the best, don't assume the worst!**
- Matthew 18 it - **Go and talk to them!**
- 1 Corinthians 13 it - **Love each other!**

Q: What do you do when responsibilities overlap or collide?

Answers:

- Practice the 3 C's - **Communication, Consultation, Courtesy**
- Practice this principle - Seek first to **understand** before you seek to be **understood!**
- Remember Ephesians 5 & Philippians 2

“Still another practical suggestion is this that we each mind our own business.

As pastors, we don't need our fingers in every pie. Besides, we don't have enough fingers.” (Bob Voss)

Q: Sadly different commandments come into play at times as teams are working and walking together. What advice would you give when the _____ commandment is in question/in play?

- 4th Commandment -
 - If you don't resolve the issue after going to the person, who should bring along with you as a part of step 2? There are so many combinations...so know and work with proper chain of command (Principal, Pastor, Circuit Pastor, DP).
 - 922 Manual - Employee Relations...In keeping with Scriptural principles and to promote appropriate communication, employees who have concerns about work-related issues are strongly encouraged to voice those concerns openly and directly with their leader or other designated representative of the organization.
- 5th Commandment - If you witness a fellow called worker in an abuse situation are we empowered to help from our positions?
 - The answer is always yes, but how you proceed will be determined by several factors...did you witness it first hand, is the called worker the abused or the abuser, what is your relationship like, etc.
 - If they are the abused remember - I see you, I'm here, there's hope, how can I help. Speak into it, but do it in a gentle way (the shame is real, identity is an issue). Don't drop it if they don't get help or admit it the first time.
 - If they are the abuser - address it and report it. They need help and others are in danger.
- 6th Commandment - What if a fellow called worker hits on you...what then? Or other forms of sexual harassment?
 - Report, report, report...assuming that by hit on we are talking inappropriate touching, comments, etc.
 - “Any employee who becomes aware of harassment or feels that they have been subjected to abusive or harassing behavior or who has worked in an offensive work environment must immediately bring the facts of the incident or incidents and the names of the individuals involved to the attention of management. Complaints may be filed directly with your Leader.”
 - Note: If you know the person and their heart and it was just a bad choice of words or a joke that offended you, Matthew 18 it. Make note of it, and if it happens again, report it.

“The Body of Christ Walks and Works Together” - Bible passages

Matthew 7:24 - “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Ephesians 4:1-6,11-13 - As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all...So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-27 - There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

2 Chronicles 30:12 - Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the Lord.

Psalms 133 - How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. 3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

John 17:20-24 - “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Galatians 5:19-25 - The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Hebrews 13:5,6 - God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” 6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

Romans 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[i] have been called according to his purpose.

Matthew 11:28,29 - “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Galatians 6:2a - Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Psalm 139:13-16 - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

1 Corinthians 10:31 - So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Timothy 4:8a - For physical training is of some value...