

Being a Member of a Congregation is like Being on a Team

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Intro:

- - **Eph. 4:16** as Christians, we work together to build up the group, cause growth of the body
 - we are a team
- **team:** (World English Dictionary)
 - a group of people organized to work together – exactly what the church is, and does
 - a group of players forming one of the sides in a sporting contest
 - two or more animals working together to pull a vehicle or agricultural implement
 - **illus.:** Jer. 51:23 (NASB) “farmer and his team. . . .”
 - **illus.:** Mic. 1:13 (NASB) “Harness the chariot to the team of horses. . . .”
- being a member of a congregation is like being on a team
 - **analogy:** help us think about the benefits of God’s plan for us to work together as Christians, and blessings we receive
- **Being a Christian is like being a team member** – teamwork – figuratively speaking
 - **Matt. 11:28-30** we take Jesus’ yoke upon us
- - **illus. video:** yoke used to harness one animal to an implement to work, and often several
 - we are harnessed together as a team to do Christ’s work – Christians, church – video
 - some have extended the analogy to be harnessed together with Christ, teamed with Christ – video
- - **Phil. 4:3a** we are yokefellows – companions – teammates
 - translations:
 - companion (NASB, NKJV)
 - yokefellow (ASB, NKJV)
 - Greek (suzugos), those united by any bond, such as marriage, relationship, office, labor, study or business; hence, a yoke-fellow, consort, comrade, colleague or partner (ISBE)
 - **2 Cor. 6:14a (NKJV)** “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” – team
 - we can’t be on the same team spiritually as unbelievers
 - **illus.:** take relationships in definition and relate to a team – equally yoked, unequally yoked
 - we are yoked together with Christians, to work together in God’s kingdom – church, family, etc.
- - thus, we are fellow workers - teamed up together with others to work together in kingdom
 - **Rom. 16:3** Paul with Aquila and Priscilla – teamed together to work
- - **1 Cor. 3:9** fellow workers with God – on His team
 - **1 Tim. 3:15** household of God
 - **illus.:** family is a team, each has a role and responsibility, work together
- - **Phil. 4:3b** fellow workers (spiritual team), in the book of life
 - Christians, saved, we’ll spend eternity together
- - **3 Jn. 1:8** when we support preachers and teachers, we are fellow workers with truth
 - **illus.:** team – elder, deacons, preachers and teachers, those we support throughout the world
- being a Christian is like being on a team – yoked together, yokefellows, fellow workers
 - What are some practical lessons we learn from this analogy? – yoked together, team

➤ **Members of a team have different roles** – but each is equally important

- **Eph. 4:7, 11-12, 15-16** Christ gives us gifts, **different roles** in the church, for **equipping** of saints, **building up** of the body of Christ, **each person must do their share**

- **illus.: team has leaders and followers**

- **illus.: team, some things everyone does and some only a few do**

- **Rom. 12:3-8** **members of body** (team) **not all have the same function**, but **each equally important**

- **illus.: brain vs. feet**, different function, each equally important

- **illus.: football, not everyone is the quarterback**, but **without each individual player doing his job, the quarterback would never have a chance to succeed**

- **our challenge is to understand our role today**, and **fulfill it** to the best of our ability, while **striving to grow** so we can fulfill other roles in the future

- **must guard against apathy and complacency**

- **must not be working to grow so much that we don't do what we can today** – tomorrow may never come

- **A team is stronger than its individual members** – sum is greater than any individual part
 - **Heb. 10:23-25** **one purpose of assembling is to stimulate one another**
 - **we would be weaker individually if it were not for the church** – stronger as member of congregation
 - **brethren who are spiritually stronger help those who are weaker**
 - **Rom. 14:1-23** even if we have to **give up certain things to help a weak brother**, we do it
 - **Heb. 12:15** we see that **no brother comes short of the grace of God**, as much as possible
- - **illus. pic.: cartoon – explain drawing** – team supports members when they are weak
- **brethren who have material possessions help those who don't have them**
 - **Ja. 1-2** **share with brethren in need**
- **illus.: geese** (revised from Chuck Swindoll, letter, October, 1991, from SermonIllustrations.com)
 - **often migrate thousands of miles**
 - **habits of geese while flying as a flock – team**
 - **those in front rotate their leadership** – team stronger, than one individual – leadership team
 - when one lead goose gets tired, it changes places with another one who leads
 - **by flying in a V-formation, the members of the flock create an upward air current** for one another - team stronger and can fly further for longer, than one individual
 - **each flap of the wings literally creates an uplift** for the bird immediately behind
 - **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
 - **when one goose gets sick or wounded, two fall out of formation with it and follow it down to help and protect it** – team takes care of individual parts
 - they stay with the struggler until it's able to fly again
 - **the geese in the rear of the formation are the ones that honk** – team members encourage each other
 - it's their way of announcing that they're following and that all is well
 - honkers in the rear encourage the ones up front who are doing most of the work
- **team is stronger than individual members**
 - **team makes each member stronger** than it would have been alone

➤ **A team is more productive than an individual member**

- **the purpose of a team is to be more productive than an individual member** – team more productive than individual work on their own

- **1 Cor. 12:14-27 the church is composed of individual members, which all add to the productivity** of the church as a whole – Eph. 4:16

- **working alone we are limited** to just what we can do personally

- **working together with the church we can accomplish much more**

- **illus.: some people can't sing on key** and would have **trouble leading singing**, but as a member of a congregation that is taken care of by someone else who has the ability

- **illus.: men worked together to save Nome, Alaska from diphtheria**

- **on January 20, 1925, the first case of diphtheria** was properly diagnosed, after other sick children had died

- **but Dr. Welch, the only doctor in Nome, didn't give the antitoxin** to the boy since it had already expired, and the boy died

- **the next day, seven-year old Bessie Stanley was diagnosed** with diphtheria in its late stages

- **Dr. Welch risked injecting her with 6,000 units** of the expired antitoxin, and she **died** later that day

- **that evening, Dr. Welch contacted Nome's Mayor** and told the town council he needed one million units of antitoxin serum to stave off what was becoming a diphtheria epidemic

- **since the weather made it impossible for an airplane** to get to Nome, their only chance of survival was to go by dog sled to pick up the serum

- **so, 20 mushers and about 150 sled dogs worked together** and **relayed diphtheria antitoxin 674 miles by dog sled** across Alaska in a record-breaking **five and a half days**, saving the small city of Nome and the surrounding communities

- **the 20 men working together, did what was impossible for one man to do**

- the purpose of a team is to be more productive than an individual member

- **illus.: Mk. 16:15-16 apostles** – teamwork

- **12 apostles, commissioned to preach** the gospel to the **whole world, accomplished it** (aided by the Holy Spirit, helped by brethren) in about **30 years**

- **illus.: Lk. 10:1 missionaries went out in teams**

- **Jesus sent apostles, and 70 out in teams of two**

- **Paul traveled with a team of people to help in the work**, often tasking individuals to do certain jobs during the journey

- **illus.: Acts 6:1-7 team of 7 deacons appointed to do the work**

- **illus.: 2 Tim. 2:3-4 we are soldiers of Christ** – church

- **soldiers serve in an army** – group, team

- **an army composed of only 1 soldier would fail** to defeat the enemy

- **the group (army) we serve in that fights against Satan and sin is the church** – group, team

- **God has given us work to do by working together with brethren in the church** – we would fail without the church

being a Christian is like being a team member (team work)
members of team have different roles
a team is more productive than an individual member

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **review PP** – relate to Christians as members of the church, local congregation

- **being a member of a congregation is like being on a team** – we're a group of people working together accomplishing more together than we could alone

- **Jesus invites everyone to be a member of His team**

- **Matt. 11:28-30** “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **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. For **My yoke is easy** and My burden is light.”

- **inv.:** come and put on Jesus' yoke, be a member of His team, do His work, and be rewarded with eternal life