



Missionary Teaming


Missionary Teams in the New Testament

As we plan for and participate in missionary teams, it is crucial that we form expectations and build teams around biblical principles for teaming. Teaming well is a fundamental piece of missionary effectiveness. We can bring unwarranted expectations that can sabotage our teams' effectiveness in the work and our relationships with one another. Thankfully, the Scriptural picture of the first missionary teams provides us with anchors that help us build toward biblically faithful missionary teams.

Jesus set the pattern for team-based missions when he sent out the Twelve two-by-two on their first ministry excursion (Mark 6:7). Soon after that he paired up the Seventy-two and sent them out to preach as well (Luke 10:1-2). This pattern continued as the early church carried out Christ's commission. These first, Spirit-filled followers went out on mission together. Working together with other sent-out ones to fulfill His mission is the pattern we see in the New Testament.

In this study, we will examine the missionary teams in the Bible by looking at those described as Paul's team members, or "co-workers." We recommend that you go through this study with your team or others who are pursuing teaming together. As you study these passages, answer these questions and record your answers:

1. How did Paul and/or his co-workers understand or describe their work? What did they do?

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2. How did they describe their co-workers? What language did they use to talk about one another?

Team Members:

1. **Barnabas:** Acts 4:36, 9:27, 13:2, 14:12-15, 15:36-39, Gal. 2:9
2. **Silas:** Acts 15:22, 32, 40, 16:25, 17:10, 18:5, 2 Thess. 1:1
3. **Timothy:** Acts 16:1-3; 17:14, 19:22, 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:16-17; Philippians 2:19, 22; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:2, 16-20
4. **Titus:** 2 Cor. 8:16-18, 23; Gal. 2:1-3; Titus 1:4
5. **Apollos:** Acts 18:24; 19:1; 1 Cor. 3:5, 21-22
6. **Prisca and Aquilla:** Acts 18:2, 8, 26; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19
7. **Tychicus:** Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12
8. **Mark:** Acts 15:38-41; Col. 4:10; Philemon 1:23-24
9. **Demas:** Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10
10. **Other "co-workers":** Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 2:25, 4:2-3; Philemon 1:1-2

As we study the biblical realities of these first teams, a few key points arise:

1. The teams were united around the missionary work. That was the purpose for which they were formed and endured.
2. The teams were in constant transition as they carried out the work.
3. Despite the transitions, team members loved one another as family in Christ and spoke of one another with deep Christian affection.
4. Conflict was not unusual.



Questions for Application

1. Who is your team?
2. Is the purpose of your team clear? What are you working toward?
3. How do you cultivate love and fellowship in the Gospel on your team? How do you talk about your teammates?
4. How do you handle conflict on your team? Are there any issues you need to deal with right now?

