

Better Together
Part 6: Building a TEAM
Ecclesiastes 4:9
November 6, 2011

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Introduction

In St. Louis last week there was a celebration for the Cardinals. It was held in the stadium and tickets sold out in 90 minutes. Let me make sure you get that... People paid money, not to see a game, but just for the chance to cheer for their team. High school marching bands played along the parade route. People parked as far as two miles away to get to the parade. Fathers and mothers hoisted small children on their shoulders to wave at the passing red and white pickup trucks carrying Cardinals.

60% of Americans buy team-related merchandise, spending an average of \$357 a year on the stuff.

http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=150

You can get your team logo on keys, earrings, pendants, t-shirts,

 chairs, mailboxes, posters, and toasters,

slippers, ornaments, neckties, and Mr. Potato Head.

So let's get honest ...

do you own anything with the logo of a sports team –

If so, what is it, and what team?

Let's see if we can get some reactions...

Eagle's logo

Redskins logo

Capitals logo, Cavaliers logo, Cardinals logo

Steelers, Vikings, Capitals
 Cavaliers, Terrapins, Tides
 Orioles, Bruins, Warriors
 Black Knights, Midshipmen, Falcons

Last year 17.2 million people went to see an NFL game,
 and some of them skipped church to do it.

Then there are the face painters ...



Did you know there was a biblical precedent for
 this kind of enthusiasm?

The reason teams are so popular can be found in
 Ecclesiastes 4:9

“Two are better off than one because together they can work more effectively.”

During these 40 days of community we’ve been encouraging
 people to get into a small group for the same reason
 teams are so popular.

Teamwork makes us more effective.

So this emphasis on teamwork and community
 will not end with the 40 Days emphasis.

Soon we will be making plans for the creation of
 all kinds of small groups throughout our church.

Some of the groups will be for fun.

Some of the groups will be designed to deepen your spiritual life.

Some will be designed to allow people a chance to serve together.

*The amazing thing is that in the small groups you will find it is serving
 together as a team that will draw you closer than anything else.*

*Not socializing together, not studying together,
 but actually doing something together draws you closer
 and for that you’re going to need team work.*

So today's message is going to show you four things it takes to build a team.

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When you study the Bible, you find that Jesus and Paul always served in teams.

They never went anywhere alone;
they took teams of people with them.
Four methods for building a team.

95

Paul's instructions to one of the young men on his team included Timothy 6:20 "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care."

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TRUST.

Teamwork starts with trust --
In order to build a team you've got to
trust people with some responsibility.

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Proverbs 20:6 Many people claim to be loyal,
but it's hard to find a trustworthy person.
That was written thousands of years ago, and
it's still human dilemma today.
If you want people to trust you, you must do three things.

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You will become trusted by

A. Being consistent

The more consistent you are, the more people are going to trust you.

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Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much."

It is in the little things in life that you prove your character;
the stuff that nobody else is ever going to see,
The stuff you think nobody cares about –
God sees it, and is evaluating your character.
God says, "If you are faithful in little responsibilities,"
"I will give you greater responsibilities," and
the way to being involved in great responsibilities is

by being faithful in the little responsibilities.
 The more you do that, the more God says,
 “You are a trustworthy person.”

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You earn trust by being consistent and

B. By BEING CONFIDENTIAL,

Just in case I’ve ever hurt your feelings by stopping you when
 you’ve ever tried to tell me something that someone else told you,
 let me say it in front of everyone so you’ll know it’s not just you...

Things that are said to you in confidence should not be told to anyone,
 not even to your pastors.

Those people trusted you, and to keep their trust you shouldn’t
 pass what they say on to anyone else.

If you think someone told you that juicy thing just so you could pass it
 on to me, don’t bother because I do not listen to second hand messages.

Don’t share it with me,

don’t share it with your spouse,

don’t share it with anyone who didn’t hear it at the same time you did.

If you know someone who can always supply you with the best gossip,
 beware because anyone who will talk to you about someone else,
 will talk to someone else about you.

If you want to be trusted and trustworthy,

Then remember, what’s said in the group, stays in the group.

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

Here’s the most modern version of that verse

Proverbs 11:13 “A gossip betrays a confidence,
 but a trustworthy man does not forward the e-mail about someone else w/o
 permission.

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We gain trust by being consistent, by being confidential and by

C. BEING CLOSE

The closer you are to someone, the more you can trust them.

Distance creates distrust.

But when you spend time with people and get to know them,
you begin to trust them.

When your trust level goes up – it produces deeper friendship.

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Proverb 17:17 “Friends love through all kinds of weather and families stick together in all kinds of trouble.”

To accommodate busy schedules,
some churches choose to hold their groups every other week.

Those groups do not produce closeness.

To stick together first you have to get together.

So to build trust be consistent, confidential, and close.

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Along with trust a good team needs **EMPATHY**.

105

1 Peter 3:8 “Live in harmony with one another...”

We got that the other week when Hannah played the piano for us.

Now look at the second part of the verse...

“be sympathetic.”

Sympathy and empathy are similar feelings
and they are essential to building harmonious team.

Everybody has a need to be understood.

You have a deep need to have your feelings validated.

Teams are strengthened when someone can say to you

“I’ve been there. I’ve had that. “You’re not weird.”

An empathetic person is somebody who validates the frustrations,
the fears,

the feelings,

and the failures that you experience.

For example, if you have back trouble,
and nobody understands how incapacitated you are, come talk to me.
I cannot heal your back but since I’ve had back trouble all my life
I understand how it can hurt you just to move your fingers.

If your favorite team loses a game,
and nobody understands your disappointment, come talk to me.
My favorite football team is the Redskins, I understand pain.
If your car breaks down, and nobody understands your frustration,
come talk to me ... I used to drive a Chrysler.

If you are not naturally an empathetic person

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The Bible tells suggests three things you can do to build that skill

A. **SLOW DOWN**

The faster you move, the more details you miss.

107

James 1:19 Be quick to listen and slow to speak.”

The human being can listen to about 650 words a minute.

But the average human being only speaks about 150 words a minute.

That leaves a 500-word-per-minute boredom factor.

So it's tempting to

read the paper and listen to your wife at the same time,

or watch TV and listen to your kids at the same time.,

and it's true. ... It is humanly possible...

But it's not empathetic.

Empathy is slowing down and listening so
you don't miss any details.

I need to apologize for my inability to listen carefully to people on
Sunday morning.

Some people have been offended by the fact that the worst time to get
my attention is before anything starts on Sunday morning.

When I have 15 minutes worth of things to do,

but only 5 minutes before the Worship Celebration starts

I'm moving so fast that I really can not effectively listen to anyone.

So I purposefully slow down, and hang around when things are over
just to be available to listen.

If you try to tell me something on Sunday morning,
and I just write it down, I'm not ignoring you...

I'm making a note to deal with it when I'm not so distracted.

If you are still offended by this – have you noticed that I never call you around 7 AM when you are busy trying to get to work?

One of the reasons we gave up our Wednesday night Bible study during the 40 days was so we could schedule small groups without adding anything more to your schedule. Adding stuff to your schedule would only make your life more hectic and we want you to slow down so you can listen to each other.

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Slowing down is the first thing that will make you more empathetic:

B. ASK QUESTIONS.

Instead of thinking people are automatically interested in everything you've experienced, show some interest in other people by drawing them out. You're going to build the empathy necessary to a team by taking an interest in other people's stories.

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Proverbs 20:5 "A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out."

So ask the question twice.

1. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fine."

2. "No really, how are you doing?"

"Well, things are busy."

Empathy will rise when you slow down enough to take a deeper interest in people.

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So we build a team with trust, empathy and **ACCOMODATION**.

God has made us all different.

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So we have to accommodate each others' differences.

2 Timothy 2:22 "Be faithful, loving and easy to get along with."

The church that first developed the materials for 40 Days of community knows all about accommodation.

Thirty years ago that church started with 60 people.

They didn't have their own building so

for the first 13 years of the church, they used 79 different facilities:

schools,

warehouses,

bank buildings,

stadiums,

parks,

and tents.

Their slogan was "This is the church you want to attend, if you can figure out where we are this week."

So imagine those first members who had to put up with all that change!

But they did it because they cared about other people enough to accommodate them.

That kind of care about other people produced a church that constantly ran out of seating capacity on Sunday mornings.

The people who had already accommodated 79 changes in 13 years knew that visitors like to come to church on Sunday morning.

So, five thousand people who had always been a part of that church, started attending on Saturday evening to make it possible for visitors to continue to attend on Sunday morning.

That's accommodation!

Do you know what that kind of unselfish accommodation produced?

More overcrowding!

So the people who were accommodated had to accommodate.

5,000 people gave up their Sunday morning service and

started attending Saturday night services so

people they didn't even know could have their Sunday morning space.

Do you know what that produced?

More overcrowding – they ran out of parking spaces!

One week they turned away over 200 cars.

People could not come to church because there was no parking spot. So the people who were accommodated by people who had been accommodated volunteered to park a mile away and ride a shuttle bus in order to accommodate visitors.

The church also had a growing small group ministry and when the small groups got crowded, people left their cozy, comfortable small group to start a new small group just so they could accommodate new people.

So I do not feel guilty when I ask people to make a change in our routine, or any of the many other things we have done to give you the chance to practice loving other people the way Jesus has loved you.

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Romans 12:18

Just do your part to get along with everybody as much as possible.

So here are four specific ways we can accommodate one another.

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A. We can accommodate **EACH OTHER'S NEEDS**.

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Romans 15:2 “Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, ‘How can I help?’”

I know you are thinking “But that takes time and I don’t have enough time and energy to take care of my own needs.”

So let’s remember the point from last week, our biggest need is to become like Jesus.

One of the best ways we can do that is to accommodate each other’s needs.

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B. accommodate **EACH OTHER'S IDEAS**

Most of the great inventions in this world seemed like a stupid idea at the time.

Years ago a guy named George wrote a letter to **John D. Rockefeller** suggesting that the problem with stopping his trains could be cured by an air-brake, and requested time to demonstrate his idea.

Rockefeller responded “I don’t have time to talk to fools.”
 So George ... Westinghouse went on to develop his air brake
 and sold the idea to Rockefeller’s competitors!
 Eventually Rockefeller wrote to Westinghouse suggesting
 that they have that meeting to discuss the air brake.
 Westinghouse wrote back “I don’t have time to talk to fools.”

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Proverbs 18:15 “The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them.”

Accommodating other people’s needs means accommodating
 their needs, listening to their idea and accommodating

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C. EACH OTHER’S PERSONALITIES.

This winter, I hope to follow up these 40 days of community,
 with a small group that helps families understand
 Four basic personality types.
 Here’s a basic preview

118

Melancholies are the organizers who like things to be done right
 They are organized, have an eye for details, and
 Without them we would all be a mess

Cholerics are the take charge people.
 They are the ones who get things accomplished.
 Without them we would have more said than done.

Sanguine personalities are fun lovers who can talk to anyone
 at any time, with or without information.
 Without them, we would all be bored.

Phlegmatics are the peace lovers
 They are the most skilled at getting along with people.
 Without them, we would all kill each other.

Don’t ask me which type is best.
 There’s nothing wrong with being any one of these types.
 The problem is when we expect the melancholies to act like sanguines,

or we expect the phlegmatics to act like choleric.
 God made us different on purpose!

119

1 Peter 4:10, “Each of you have been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others.”

So we have to accommodate each other’s needs, ideas, personalities, and

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D. EACH OTHER’S FAULTS.

Whenever we start new groups people think

“Wow, this group is almost perfect.

But it doesn’t take long to figure out, “These people have issues.”

What do you do when you figure that out?

Three choices:

1. You can start **pretending** we’re all perfect and put a smile on.

Or you can say,

1. “I’m **getting out** of this group so I can find a perfect group.”

There is no such thing as a perfect group.

3. Or you can just **accept it** the fact that you aren’t perfect either and accommodate and choose to work together.

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Ephesians 4:2 Be patient with each other.

Making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”

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We build a team with trust, empathy, accommodation and finally with **MISSION.**

Let’s say we got together to form a football team.

We practiced, got jerseys, helmets, pads, and rented a field.

Let’s say we even got to the point where we designated who was going to play what part on the team.

Anybody want to be quarterback?

(Paden walks up, in uniform)

All that could be fun but it's pointless if we do not start playing against some other teams because our team has to have a purpose. Having some kind of mission to accomplish is what makes a group into a team.

123

Philippians 2:2 "Be of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."

Notice it says, 'maintaining.'

How are you going to maintain God's purposes in your life after '40 Days of Community?'

124

There's only one way...

Hebrews 10:25 "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together but let us encourage one another."

When I was about 10 years old I went to see the **Redwood forest**.

125

These trees are the largest living things on the planet.

They can grow 400 to 500 feet tall.

I have seen trunks that are so big they actually dug out the middle and you can drive a car through them!

They are the biggest living things on the planet.

But their roots are so small and shallow they would fall over in a storm.

But they remain standing for centuries because they always grow in groves, intertwine their roots, and they hold each other up!

That's a picture of the teamwork God wants in your small group:

Intertwined and holding each other up.

You're going to have storms in your life, relational storms, financial storms, health storms.

You're going to have all kinds of problems in your life that will knock you over if you're on your own.

You need a group of people who are walking together with you -- like redwoods with their roots intertwined.

126

Philippians 1:27 “Live in a way that brings honor to the good news of Christ. Standing strong,”

there’s that phrase,
 “Standing strong with one purpose, working together,”
 that’s serving together as a team

For example,

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the most impressive thing I’ve ever seen this church do was the Christmas program we’ve hosted for our helping hands clients. Many of these families are so needy they are unable to provide much of a Christmas for their children.

So for the past ten months we have been saving up all the toys that have been donated.

Over the next few weeks, we’re going to take them out of storage and set them up in a room like a store.

Then we’ll invite our helping hands clients to shop, for free in the store, and together we will provide a great Christmas for some children.

This program, just like our music program, youth ministry, children’s quizzing, café, etc. cannot be accomplished by just one person.

Kay has done this for years, but her knees just won’t allow her to do it this year.

So in true community, Dee Karrlson has stepped up to lead the program, but she’s going to need a team of volunteers to move stuff out of storage,

set up tables,

sort the toys,

supervise the store, etc.

She needs a TEAM.

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Cheryl is talented but she’s not learned to play piano, drums, and guitar all at the same time ... she needs a team including the people in the sound room that make it all possible.

129

Our youth ministry is thriving these days because

we have a team of people working together.
 Last summer we discovered how prayer is intensified
 when intercessors, agreeers, and listeners all work together.
lights: 14-17 off, start fading house down.

130

So when we look at all the overwhelming problems
 around at the world:

poverty,
 disease,
 AIDS,
 illiteracy,
 hunger,
 war –

It'd be very easy to think "The problems are too big for me to solve."
 We're tempted to ask God, "why don't you do something about this?"
 God says, "I'm asking you the same question,
 why don't you do something about this -- You're the one on Earth."

lights: house dim, platform just #13

131

Thousands of years ago,
 there was a group of people who decided to build a tower.
 They got together as a team and started construction.

The only problem was they began to worship the building itself, and
 God wanted to stop the project because it became an idol to them.
 The builders had become proud of what they were doing, so,
 the only way God could stop them was to confuse their communication,
 and they got all different kinds of languages.

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God said, "If as one people," that's a team,
 "speaking the same language, they have begun to do this.
 Then nothing they plan will be impossible for them." Genesis 11:6

When you have a committed team,
 when you have a compelling purpose,
 when you have clear communication, nothing will be impossible."

If we build small group teams within our church family where people find trust, and empathy.

If we build small group teams within our church family where people's gifts are valued and accommodated, and where they have a common clear mission that with God's help, nothing will be impossible.

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TRUST
EMPATHY
ACCOMODATION
MISSION
