

## **“The Antioch Solution”**

The Antioch Church was comprised of a multi-racial, multi-cultural team of breakthrough believers set on fire by the power of the Holy Spirit. At Antioch the believers submitted to a team of Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers. When they established world evangelism, a tactical headquarters over their region, and financially blessed the brethren in Jerusalem, they did it as a team. It was through this team ministry that they changed the known world and brought Christianity to the forefront (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3).

The word **team** is defined as harnessing or yoking people together. It is a group of persons joined together in the same mind, speaking the same thing, and going in the same direction. It may better be defined as **synergistic**. There are three distinct properties that establish a team: synergy, unity and relationship. Allow me to define these three elements.

### **1) The first component that causes teams to be successful is Synergy.**

What makes up synergy?

The word **synergism** is defined as the combined action of two or more substances or agencies to achieve an effect greater than that which each is individually capable. For example, it's assumed that if one horse pulls two tons of weight then two horses would be able to pull four tons of weight. However, the truth is that when two horses are yoked (teamed) together they can pull 18 tons of weight.

What we desperately need is a synergistic approach to everything we do in the church. We need the combined action of two or more people to achieve an effect greater than that which one person is capable of doing. Throughout the Old and New Testament, as it was in the early Antioch church, teamwork was a way of life. For example, Jesus sent the disciples out two by two (Matthew 10), Paul took Priscilla and Aquilla with him on some of his ministry trips (Acts 18) as well as Barnabas, Silas and many others. Nehemiah assembled a capable team in order to rebuild the walls at Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3), and Moses operated with multiple teams, among which were found Aaron, Hur, Joshua, the twelve spies, and the seventy elders.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says,

*“Two are better than one because they have a good return on their work: If one falls down his friend can help him up but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him! Also, if two lie down together they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

What we need is a team that has an infrastructure (an underlying base or foundation), of like-minded people, committed to one another, and going in the same direction. In order to achieve the Antioch team ministry model, we will need two additional keys beyond synergism; they are unity and relationship.

## 2) The second component for having an effective team ministry is Unity.

Let's look at what makes up unity.

- **Clear Communication.**

When the communication of a team is superficial and non-existent, the productivity of the team is limited. However, when team members communicate to one another, ideas and insight are expressed freely and politely.

- **Team unity occurs through Shared Goals.**

Teams don't function well when each team member operates in individualism or isolationism. Real teamwork occurs when we share ideas, successes, and failures. Also, team unity is fractured when members use the team for their own ego satisfaction, or the group holds rigidly to only one goal. When this happens, group cohesiveness is destroyed. Positive teams tend to hold to "commonly shared ambitions" and they focus on "results oriented goals."

- **Team unity happens when a spirit of Cooperation occurs.**

Teams that are aggressive, hostile, or demanding don't usually accomplish a great deal. Such teams have a tendency to seek their own fame, demand authority, and are opposed to change. Effective teams are friendly, accepting, realistic, seeking collaboration from others and reaching beyond themselves. They are supportive of change and function under authority comfortably.

- **Team unity happens through team Responsibility and Involvement.**

Ineffective teams do not promote individual responsibility or growth and the members of the team don't identify with one another. Strong teams encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own growth and the members are personally identified with the team's endurance. Whatever the team does, including positive or negative results, is viewed as the responsibility of the whole.

- **Wholesome team unity creates Flexibility.**

How a team functions internally is an indicator of its healthiness. For instance, unhealthy teams often set up repetitive tasks and abandon experimentation and discovery. Time is viewed as an obstacle, and members are often heard saying, "There's not enough time." The function of healthy teams exemplifies flexibility and the ability to change as the need arises. The team develops members that have freedom to express their ideas through excitement, enthusiasm, concern, and in some cases even tension. Time is viewed as a tool, and members are often heard saying, "How can we make the most effective use of the time that we have?"

- **Team Unity occurs through Functional Support.**

Dysfunctional teams try to keep differences out of sight, and only the leader helps a team member in need and members rarely have the opportunity to test out new ideas or skills. Healthy teams expect that all members will serve as a resource person to the entire team. Differences are anticipated and viewed as useful. It is hoped that all team members will use their skills and try new insights with the whole team. The team is satisfied only with concrete progress or results toward Godly set goals. Establishing a team ministry within the church is vital, valid, and worthwhile. The alternative to team ministry is religiosity, stagnation, and a ministry that operates significantly below its God ordained potential.

### 3) The third component for team ministry is Developing Effective Relationships.

Let's investigate how we can build solid relationships.

- **Solid relationships are built on Self-Sacrifice.**

In I Samuel 18:4 we read, *"and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt."* Jonathan became vulnerable when he let David have his garment and his means of protection. It is when we say, "I will deny myself for you" and sacrifice for our fellow team members that true relationship will occur.

- **Effective relationship is built on Concern for Others.**

In I Samuel 19:2 Jonathan told David, *"Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning and stay in a secret place and hide yourself."* A committed relationship always involves practical demonstrations of concern for others on your team. The Apostle Paul teaches in I Thessalonians 5:14 that, *"We are to admonish (rebuke) the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men."* We must learn to act on our commitment. Our concern should result in encouragement if any of our team members are downcast, help if they are going through difficulties and admonition if they have room for improvement in any given area.

- **Effective relationship is built on Verbal Support.**

I Samuel 19:4 says, *"... Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father."* Though King Saul was incredibly angry with David and wanted to kill him, Jonathan stood by his friend. It's easy to undermine an individual through gossiping or by not speaking on his behalf when someone is critical. We should not only speak highly of our teammates, we need to counter any negative remarks, by asserting our loyalty. In the same verse, Jonathan says to his father, *"Let not the King do wrong to his servant David, he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly."*

- **Effective relationship in a team is built through Openness.**

I Samuel 20:1 says, *"Then David fled from Naioth at Ramath, and went to Jonathan and asked, 'What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?'"* Notice how transparent and open David was. He was trusting in Jonathan to be honest with him. One of the greatest needs in team relationship is being open with one another. We will need to be willing to admit weaknesses and seek answers together. Communication should always be clear and open, nothing should be hidden.

- **Effective relationship in a team is built through Availability.**

I Samuel 20:4 says, *"Jonathan said to David, 'Whatever you want me to do, I'll do it for you.'"* What an incredible statement of commitment, basically Jonathan is saying, "Whenever you need me, I'll be there and I'm willing to do whatever needs to be done". This can be a very difficult thing to do because many of us are self-absorbed. However, the more we think in terms of others the more effective our team becomes.

- **Effective relationship in a team is built on Affection.**

I Samuel 20:41 says, "...*David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together – but David wept the most.*" David and Jonathan loved each other. We need to love one another if we are going to implement this team model. What the world needs to see is brotherly love. The world needs to see the love in the Church not the quarreling and fighting that presently exists.

**Conclusion:**

In every team there will need to be a leader. It's what is known as the first among equals. If we will embrace this team model, allowing a chosen person to help in the decision process all the while causing a spirit of teamwork to flow at high levels, we will reach our city and beyond for Christ.

**Declare and Decree over yourself:**

1. Synergism
2. Unity
3. Relationship

**Pray:**

Father, in the name of Jesus, I accept my roll as a team player. I desire to work together in synergy, unity and relationship. I rebuke all realms of isolationism, independence, individualism and self-centeredness. I declare I am a valuable participant of the Body of Christ. I receive the mantle of ministry in my Church and believe I am a vital part of its success. I decree I will accept this ministry and I receive it as the word of the Lord, in Jesus' Name...Amen!

\* Some of this information was taken out of John Maxwell's book entitled "Teamwork."

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