

New Philippians series begins with this
useful message from Philippians 1 --
a lesson on unity leading to productivity!



ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" Volume 12 Number 8

The Recipe for Unity and Productivity - Phil 1:1-11

SPECIAL FEATURE: FREE POWER POINT AVAILABLE
JUST REPLY WITH "PHIL 1 PP" IN BODY OF EMAIL

This "MM" is the 8th of 2013 -- and the 140th email sermon overall. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon is the first message in a five-sermon series on the book of Philippians. All "Ministers' Minutes" are archived at

<http://www.abarc.org/Resources/Ministers%20Minutes/Ministers%20Minutes.htm>

Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it! May God bless your labors!

Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM FAST FACT

ARM sent 5 baptistries to mission fields in May-June 2013

India -- Japan -- Mexico -- Uganda --Nicaragua

39 Jail baptistries. 17 mission baptistries.
and 2 military baptistries were sent in 2012

Since 1973, ARM has donated over **1,540** baptistries to prisons!
Plus, hundreds have been shipped to military bases and mission fields!

The Recipe for Unity and Productivity - Phil 1:1-11

The alarm rang. It was Sunday morning. "Get outta bed, son! It's time to get ready for Bible school and church!"

"DO I HAFTA, MOM? YOU KNOW I DON'T HAVE MANY FRIENDS DOWN THERE!"

"Indeed that is true, but you must go!"

"WHY DO I HAFTA GO, MOM?"

"Son, you know there are many good reasons: Bible school is so important to learning the Bible and building character. Plus, Jesus said, 'This do in remembrance of me' -- we need to take communion."

"And besides, THE FOLKS WANT A SERMON EVERY SUNDAY AND YOU ARE THE PREACHER!!"

I'm sure that story DOES NOT typify the situation at your church....

What should be the relationship of the evangelist and the congregation? Our text today describes a GREAT relationship that Paul had with the Christians in Philippi. It led to UNITY AND PRODUCTIVITY -- harmony and fruitfulness!

LET'S LOOK AT THE TEXT: Philippians 1:1-11

Summarize Philippian church's early history -- 2nd Miss. Journey; Acts 16.6-40. Lydia, the jailer. Good start, harmony, growth!

Here we find the RECIPE FOR UNITY.

- 1 Past: Productive partnership**
- 2 Present: Passionate participation**
- 3 Future: Progress in Purity**

I. Past: Productive Partnerships - Philippians 1:1-6

What do these have in common?

Proc/Gamble; Martin & Lewis; Colgate-Palmolive; Mantle & Maris; Dunn & Bradstreet; Brooks & Dunn; Abbott & Costello; Smith & Wesson; Lucy & Desi; Fred & Ethel; Mutt & Jeff

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS!

Anyone here with lots of children, g'kids? What do YOU and those famous duos have in common?

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS!

We have six children, 3 granddaughters so far. I'd like to think we've had a productive partnership in our 43 years of marriage.

Joy in a productive partnership! Even thru the hard times!

ILLUS: 50th Wedding anniversary conversation as Ezra & Esther reflect on five decades of marriage.

Ezra says, "You have always been by my side, Esther!" Then continues.

"We were broke as teen-age newly weds -- but you were always by my side, Esther!"

"We struggled through the depression -- but you were always by my side, Esther!"

"I was drafted in WWII; -- but you were always by my side, Esther!"

"We had business failures in the 50s; -- but you were always by my side, Esther!"

"I have been battling all these health problems -- but here you are, always by my side, Esther!"

"I think I have figured it out, Esther! You are just BAD LUCK!"

SERIOUSLY, PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS are the key to real productivity.

Productivity produces unity and unity leads to more productivity. Consider this from chapter four:

Phil 4:15-16 **15** Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. **16** For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

TEAMWORK and a HARVEST OF SOULS. It is true of Paul and the Philippians; it can and SHOULD be true of 21st century congregations.

2. Present: Passionate participation - Philippians 1:7-8

Sounds a lot like marriage, again...productive past, passionate participation in the present!

An old couple were holding hands in church.

The preacher noticed and remarked to them on the way out, "Still in love after 58 years of marriage?"

"Oh, I guess," said the wife. "But it's the only way I can keep him from cracking his knuckles!"

When love wanes, intentional acts of love, joint-participation, and service can rekindle the flame!

A Christian counselor once dealt with a wife so desperate in her 20-year marriage that she remarked that she wanted to "really hurt her husband." The wise counselor knew how to turn this evil motivation into something good.

"I know how you can really hurt your husband," he said. "I call it the 'spoil and steal' method! For 6 months you give him everything he wants. Spoil him. Pamper him. Cruelly fool him into thinking you love him more and more. Then abruptly announce you are leaving him. That will really hurt him."

The lady liked the strategy and immediately began. She came back after 2 months and told the counselor she was following his instructions. All was going well. But when she came back after 3 months, she said she was beginning to doubt it would work.

"Well," said the counselor, "You could leave him now, I guess, though it's not been 6 months."

"Leave him now?" she gasped. "After 3 months of 'spoil & steal' I love him more than when we first were married!"

Recommendation for estrangement: Find a common interest, a common purpose, and work on it together!

Two men in a congregation were at odds ... the elders wisely placed them both on the church van maintenance team. Though not getting along, they both wanted to see the vehicle mechanically sound. Soon, their joint labors resulted in great closeness.

Have you ever wondered why military veterans often stay so close over decades?

Why they continue to attend service reunions? They grew to love DEEPLY because they SERVED CLOSELY in a battle that mattered! The same should -- and CAN -- be true of spiritual comrades.

Serve alongside your preacher, elders, deacons, participants in a battle for men's eternal souls and you'll grow closer:

PRESENT: PASSIONATE PARTICIPATION

1 Past: Productive partnership

2 Present: Passionate participation

3 Future: Progress in Purity

3. Future: Progress in Purity - Philippians 1:6, 9-11

Who is the worker in verse 6? How long?? The Father is working IN his cooperative children!

What does the Father specialize in? Love, knowledge, insight.

This is important because we will be tempted to choose “the good over the best.” 10a

Satan is delighted when we choose the good over the best. Most of us are far more tempted by the good than the bad. Here’s what I mean. WE WILL NOT FALL FOR THE EVIL CHOICE ON MOST OCCASIONS, BUT WE TOO OFTEN PICK THE GOOD ALTERNATIVE RATHER THAN THE BEST!

What if Billy Graham or Bob Russell or James DeForrest Murch had decided to be a professional Boy Scout Leader rather than a proclaimer of the Gospel?

What if evangelist Dwight L. Moody had STAYED a shoe salesman? What if missionary legend William Carey had remained a shoe cobbler? What if Knofel Staton had settled for staying a flight controller?

All good choices, noble professions, honorable pursuits. But DIDN'T GOD HAVE SOMETHING BETTER? They chose the best. Their greatest temptation might not have been choosing evil, but, rather, choosing the GOOD OVER THE BEST!

Purity, power, and productivity come from love and insight. Loving God, loving people, and growing in insight will lead us to choose the best and be fruitful to the fullest – for eternity.

Future: Progress in Purity by choosing THE BEST!

The American Cancer Society is good. Christ’s church is best. If you have to choose between good and best, chose the best. CHOOSE THE ETERNAL OVER TEMPORARY!

The Muscular Dystrophy campaign may be a good cause. Evangelism is best. Choose the best. A seminar on the works of Robert Frost is good. A revival on the book of Philippians is best. Choose the best.

Balloon launches and boat rides and band practice and biscuit baking and bowling leagues and Busch stadium and barbecue buffets may all be labeled good. But you are urged to commit to choose the best.

The best involves JESUS; THE BEST INVOLVES ETERNITY. JESUS AND ETERNITY ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLY SUPERIOR TO ANYTHING THIS OLD WORLD HAS TO OFFER!

Charles H. Spurgeon once wisely observed, "If a man might have a cottage on a hundred years' lease, would he prize it much more than the possession of a palace for a day?" Of course he would -- and this is what adds so much preciousness to the joys of heaven, for they are eternal.

ONLY ONE LIFE, 'TWILL SOON BE PAST. ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR CHRIST WILL LAST!

If you have never given yourself to Christ and His church, come as we sing a song of invitation.



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