

SEVENTY DIVIDED BY TWO

The Disciples

One of the great portions used to advocate evangelism is found in Luke 10:1-24. So often we read about the seventy who went out to preach the gospel and then how they testified about the miracles that took place. However we do not really take time to really analyse this very important passage.

Many times when I reflect on the earlier pioneering pastors and evangelists I think of pastors who have gone out alone to minister the Word of God. God used them and today our denomination is one of the largest in the country.

Yet in spite of this I ask myself if this is was the model that Jesus wanted us to use to reach the lost of this world? I would dare to say that this portion of the Word of God is the basis for evangelism from Jesus' point of view.

Even in the book of Acts we read of Paul and Barnabas and then Paul and Silas as well as Barnabas and Mark. We do not read of people going out on their own without support. Being sent out two by two they were faced with things that they did not expect and yet still had to deal with them. This still applies to our day and age.

Two people going to the same city and to the same house means that **“there had to be a relationship between the two disciples.”** In this modern day and age it is a common tendency for us to do things on our own. Serve God on our own! Reach out to the lost on our own!

God expects us as His children to be in a healthy, wholesome relationship with each other. Our Christianity must go out beyond ourselves, and our immediate family to be a reality to our brothers and sisters in Christ at all times, particularly outside our set church services.

Not only was there a relationship, but **“there was an understanding between the two disciples.”**

If we look at the twelve disciples, we see people from different tribes, different personalities, different political views, and different working classes. The only common factor between them was Jesus.

For many of us it is easy and convenient to be with someone from our own class and background. Just imagine Peter and Judas together. One an intellectual, and the other a fisherman. One would betray Jesus and the other deny Him. Or imagine Matthew and James the son of Zebedee together. One was a tax collector scheming how he could extort extra taxes out of people and the other a fisherman who wanted to call down fire from heaven on hypocrites. Hard to imagine!

Yet the Bible does not say who partnered with who. It just states that the seventy went out two by two.

They had to understand each other but more than that “they also had to accept each other.” Very often we might understand people and more often than not use that knowledge to either accept or reject them.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus you will find that rejection never came from His side. It always came from those who were confronted with whom He was and is. Therefore as believers we have

no reason or excuse to reject or avoid each other. If you do not accept your brother or sister can you really say that you are a Christian?

Going beyond the realm of acceptance, “there must be a genuine act of cooperation with each other.” Most times we forget that when we look at the seventy they were all called to go out and minister to people. They all had their own style of ministry based on their individual personalities. However nowhere in the Bible do we read of how the seventy ministered as thirty five teams in thirty five different towns or villages. Clearly not only did they know and accept each other, they also learnt to work with each other. Learning how to combine all their positive attributes to make an effective witness for Christ.

Excluding your brother or sister whatever reason is not an option if we are sincere about our walk with Christ.

So often as we look at ourselves as co-workers with Christ we fail to look at other Christians as also being co-workers with Christ. This is made more difficult for us when we forget that whilst we are all individuals, we as a collective constitute the same body, with the same purpose and the same mission.

It is common practice in the secular world to send someone who is causing bodily harm to himself to a psychologist and even be institutionalised for his own protection. Sadly, we as Christians fail to see or recognise the folly of our actions when we wilfully avoid and even destroy other who are in fact part of the same body of Christ.