

*A Message by Henry Mukonda: Pastor from Zambia, Africa
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PARTNERSHIP THE CALL TO WHICH WE SHOULD RESPOND. PHILIPPIANS 1:1-8.

I. INTRODUCTION: The author is very excited as he writes this letter. That is why some people call it "a joy letter". The reasons are many, but in the text we are introduced to one of the reasons for his excitement. It is the partnership he has with the saints, God's holy people in Christ Jesus, at Philippi. (Philippians 1:4-5).

II. DEFINITION: We need to know what this partnership is.

1. It is "Participating together". These saints did not go with Paul on the missionary journey but by their giving from the first day to the very end they were participating together with Paul. (Philippians 4:10-19). He again bubbles with excitement because he does not feel lonely but he has a team behind him.

2. It is "working together". Throughout the letter there is this idea of team work. He uses very strong family-bond terms to describe their working together. He starts to address them as "brothers and sisters" from (Philippians 1:12). In chapter 2 he calls them to be working together as partners; to be like-minded (Philippians 2:1-5), so that they will be like the Lord Jesus.

3. It is "getting involved" He takes an example of one of them: Epaphroditus. He calls him his brother, co-worker, fellow soldier, and their messenger. This is someone who is involved (Philippians 2:25) and now calls them to be involved also, as seen in (Philippians 4:8). They are to be involved in what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praise worthy.

III. PURPOSE: Partnership serves many purposes but let me highlight just 3.

1. It opens doors to bigger and better means to serve: In Philippians 1:9-11 the apostle Paul outlines his wish: The saints will love more, their knowledge will increase, their discernment will be accurate and they will be filled with the fruit of righteousness. These are deep things of God.

2. It prepares partners for the next level: Partnership prepares us for the next level. The next level is that the church should seriously work together because the devil has wanted to divide us all the time so that we are weak. We tend to unite on other things and not on the gospel – why?

3. It helps us obey God: Scripture is full of the call to partner with God. The question “Who will go for us?” is asked directly to Isaiah but, by implication, it is asked everywhere in Scripture. The priestly service was introduced for the same purpose. The prophetic office came in for the same. The Lord Jesus came to fulfill that call. We are here to make that calling real – that we are Christ’s Ambassadors.

IV. CONCLUSION: I want to end with the words in Philippians 1:6. God begins a good work and is faithful to carry on that good work in you until Christ comes. Are you willing to partner with God as He carries out that good work in you? Take a step of faith by allowing God to start that good work in you.