

Never Alone
by Glenn Lucas and Victor Belton

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In many churches today, a plethora of solo agents is going about God's business. These solo agents, both professional church staff members and lay leaders, are dedicated, hard-working servants, deeply involved in ministry for the sake of God's Kingdom. And many are tired, worn out and burning or burnt out. Why? One factor is that these servants are trying to do alone what God would have them do with others.

Solo agents fall into a cyclical pattern that lessens their effectiveness. They see the breadth and depth of the ministry that needs to be done. So they begin to work longer hours, juggling task upon task and growing more and more weary in the work. Relationships suffer, genuine devotional time falls by the wayside, and energy and health diminish, while anxiety and frustration mount. At this point, some solo agents determine that all will be well if they just work harder. Others give up. Some figure out that God does not intend for them to do the work alone.

Scripture gives us numerous examples of team at work. In Exodus 17, Joshua leads Israel's army into battle against the Amalekites. Moses, with the staff of God, observes the battle from a hill top. When Moses holds his hands up, the Israelite army is winning the battle but when his arms become tired and he lowers them, the Amalekite army is winning. As the battle rages on, Moses grows weary. So Aaron and Hur pull up a rock on which Moses takes a seat. Each takes a position on either side of Moses to help Moses and the army of Israel by holding up Moses' arms when he grows weary. Through this team effort, God gives Israel the victory.

Ministry done in teams is far greater in its effectiveness and efficiency than ministry executed by solo agents. We can accomplish more together than an individual can accomplish alone. Team ministry allows for more in depth planning. It raises up new leaders and enhances the skills of those already in leadership. Team ministry results in greater ownership of the ministry by those on the team. Shared ministry allows sharing of the burdens of ministry and when difficulties arise, the team provides a context to address the issues. Just as Moses grew weary in supporting the army of Israel, so do those who attempt to do ministry alone. If Moses had been alone on the hill, that battle would have been lost by Israel. It was the team of Moses, Aaron and Hur working in support of Joshua and the army that won the day.

Who are your Aaron and Hur in ministry? For whom are you an Aaron or Hur?

The wondrous work of making and nurturing disciples, in which God has invited us to join him, is meant to be done in team. From the very beginning he put us into team, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). Jesus

sent his disciples out in pairs (Luke 9 & 10). He used them as a team to feed the 5000 (Matthew 14) and again to feed the 4000 (Matthew 15). He took a team, Peter, James and John, with him up on the mountain where he was transfigured (Matthew 17). He took the same team of disciples aside with him to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane before his betrayal (Matthew 26). The Acts of the Apostles is replete with examples of teams in ministry.

Scriptural examples point us to the importance of team in ministry. God does not expect us to go it alone. That is why he sets us in the community of the church and gives to the members of the church various gifts and talents. It is possible to do quality work in the church acting alone, but the power of working in team usually brings greater results in the ministry because the work is planned and executed by many rather than one. Team ministry enhances and enriches the lives and ministry of those involved in it. ■

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