# **Partnership – Lecture for Central and Eastern European Consultation**

## Bible Centre, Dömös, Hungary 2nd October 2018

Where are we going?

1. Define partnership
2. Practical Learning Experiences
3. Scriptural Practice

**Definition**

Greek word - koinōnia

Translated in various ways in scripture

1) a partner, associate, comrade, companion

2) a partner, sharer, in anything Thayer

**Use in Scripture**

* It’s used of the personal relationship that we as believers should have with each other (Acts 2:42, Philemon 1:6 and 1 John 1:3)
* It’s used of the way believers handle finance (Romans 15:26, 2 Corinthians 8:3b&4, 9:13)
* It’s used of the relationship between believers in the church (1 Corinthians 1:9 & 10:16)
* It’s used of our relationship with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:4 & Philippians 2:1&2)
* It’s used of the agreements reached over specific areas of service (Galatians 2:9)
* It’s used over cooperation in service (Philippians 1:4-6)
* It’s used of our relationship with Christ because of his death and resurrection (Philippians 3:10&11)
* It’s used of our responsibilities to other believers (Philemon 1:6, 1 John 1:3,6&7)

**What Partnership in the New Testament Involved**

* “Big Picture” Situations
* The work of the local church
* The work of individuals

**The Big Picture**

* Apollos, a Jew a native of Alexandria, encouraged in ministry in Europe (Acts 18, 19 and I Corinthians 16:12)
* Timothy described as co-worker, was sent to a number of places (Acts 19:22, Romans 16:21 and 1 Corinthians 4:7 etc.).
* Priscilla and Aquila, Paul’s co-workers in Christ Jesus (Acts 18 and Romans 16)
* Titus, my true son in our common faith, my partner and co-worker among you (2 Corinthians 8 and Titus 1:4)
* Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. (Galatians 2)

**What did “Partnership in Service” look like? – The Philippian Example**

**What is partnership in Service?**

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of **your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:4-6

**Who were the partners?**

* Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath **we** went outside the city gate to the river, where **we** expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began **to speak to the women who had gathered there.**
* Acts 16:14 One of those listening was **a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia,** a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God**. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.**
* Acts 16:15 When **she and the members of her household were baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded **us.**

**But who was there?**

* Paul - a learned Jewish Scholar and a Roman citizen
* Silas – a prophet, faithful brother a Jew and a Roman citizen
* Luke – a learned historian and doctor (the beloved physician Colossians 4:17) and a Gentile

(Almost certainly spoke Greek as a mother tongue)

* Timothy – mixed Jewish/ Gentile parentage
* Lydia – a successful business woman and a native of Thyatira
* The family of Lydia
* Other ladies
* Later a converted slave girl
* Later still a jailor and his family

**Why was their such an unexpected result?**

* Partnership with God – being where they were called by God. Acts 16:10
* Understanding what the Gospel meant – “they were all one in Christ Jesus” Galatians 3:28

**How is partnership developed?**

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being **united with Christ**, if any comfort from his love, if any **common sharing in the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete **by being like-minded**, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

* **Relationship,**
* **Partnership,**
* **Commitment**

**Philippians 2:1&2**

**What is the evidence of Holy Spirit driven Partnership?**

But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.**Philippians 2:17**

* **Sacrificial living and commitment**

**Our Responsibility – the Philemon Example**

**Extreme Example from:**

* A wealthy Roman Citizen
* His wife and son or brother
* The church that meet in their house
* A thief who was a slave
* The apostle Paul

**The Process**

* Paul’s recognition of the reality of the situation and his responsibilities.
* Paul’s need to lead the process.
* Paul’s need to be a guide and a mentor to all involved.

**The Reality**

* The situation was a challenge to the social and political order.
* There were personal issues between Philemon and Onesimus.
* Whatever the outcome Philemon’s relations, the church that met in their house and the community in Colossae would be impacted.

**The Starting Point**

* Paul considered both the key players his partner.
* Philemon - “I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ” 1:6.
* Onesimus - He has become useful both to you and to me.  I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you.  I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 1:11b -13

**Paul’s Goal**

* He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. So, if you consider me a partner, **welcome him as you would welcome me**. 1:16b-17.

**The Mentoring Process**

* Consider the options
* Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. 1: 8-9a
* Authority
* Persuasion

**The Mentoring Process**

Ask

What the issues are?

How should they be addressed?

**Positive Action**

* He describes Philemon as “our dear friend” 1:1. It was the team view.
* He describes his love and faith, “I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus” 1:5.
* He acknowledges the encouragement Philemon has been,”Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people” 1:7.
* He acknowledged the expected outcome, “Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask” 1:21.

**Be sure of the Issues**

* The constraints of Roman law.
* Onesimus ’Actions – he had stolen money and in so doing betrayed Philemon’s trust.
* The spiritual dimension, God had intervened in the lives of Philemon and Onesimus

**Resolving the Problems of Roman Law**

* Paul used Roman Law.
* The “Law of Fortum” demanded that anyone who found a slave should send him back.
* Paul wrote, “I am sending him back to you”1:12. This was the law.
* The law stated that the slave had no rights in this or any situation. The owner could do as he pleased.
* Paul reminded Philemon of this by the comments which follow.

**Resolving the Problems of Debt**

* Paul used Roman Law again
* He offered to pay the debt.

“If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self,” 1:18&19

**Resolving the Problems - The Spiritual Dimension**

**“My very heart”**

**“The Sovereign will of God**

**“Has become useful to you and to me”**“Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.” 1:16&17