

THE APOSTLE PAUL’S CHURCH AND MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

	LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS	GROWING PARTNERSHIPS	DEEP PARTNERSHIPS
WITH CHURCHES	Corinth; Galatia; several churches from Paul’s first missionary journey	Colosse; Thessalonica; Jerusalem	Antioch; Philippi; Ephesus
WITH INDIVIDUALS	Syzygus & Clement (Phil. 4:3); Demas (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10); Apollos	John Mark; Priscilla & Aquila; Onesimus; Peter; John	Timothy; Barnabas; Silas; Titus; Luke
WHAT WAS SHARED IN PARTNERSHIP	Varying amounts of encouragement, rebukes, and/or argumentation depending on the person’s/church’s heart; Money (or pleas for same); Paul did most of the praying; Stressful and limited communiqués; A limited advance of the kingdom emanated from their partnership due to the below limiting factors	Open to counsel and input from either/both sides; Mutual submission to common goals; Freedom to operate either independently or jointly; Both sides prayed for each other; Open, regular communiqués; Significant missionary outreach occurred, albeit mostly in separate realms (e.g., Gal. 2:9)	Free/open interchange of resource personnel and their expertise; Transparency and risk-taking on both sides about motives, money, and potentially touchy, personal issues; Prayer was essential and fervent by all; Frequent, passionate communiqués; Intimate relationships led to a most fruitful mutual advance of the Gospel (e.g., Acts 19:8–10)
REASONS FOR VARYING LEVELS OF DEPTH IN PARTNERSHIPS	Spiritual immaturity; victims of spiritual warfare; sin or disobedience; doctrinal error; lack of and/or limited time spent together	Mutual warmth and respect; common but not necessarily identical goals; ability to operate independently	Commonly held passions, aims, and goals; they suffered together and for one another; time spent together was repeated and substantial
SUMMARY VERSES	1 Cor. 3:2 “I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it.” Also Gal. 1:6; 3:1; 4:16; 5:7–9	Col. 2:5 “I delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.” Also 1 Thess. 1:4–10	Phil. 1:7 “It is right for me to feel this way about you, since I have you in my heart.” Also Phil. 2:19–22
TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP	DEPENDENT, OR PERHAPS EVEN CODEPENDENT AT TIMES	INDEPENDENT	INTERDEPENDENT

This chart illustrates that there is not a “one-size-fits-all” model of partnership. Biblical partnerships can be individual and/or corporate. It can be church-based, or mission-based, or both at the same time. It can be limited to single matters such as funding or programming or it can be more full-bodied. It can happen on a one-time or occasional basis, or on an ongoing basis. It can have significant limitations, or it can be fewer, deeper, broader, and everything in between.

However, the most satisfying and fruitful partnerships went well beyond a mere business model, financial transactions, standards of accountability, and modest prayers. Rich partnerships in the Gospel arose out of deep relationships based on shared passion, mutual goals, and much time spent together. This should give us much to pray about and ponder.

POSSIBILITIES (AND PERILS) OF PARTNERSHIP

Presentation Notes

Reflections on Acts 2:42

The biblical concept of partnership is **rooted in** and must **result in** a shared relationship.

Acts 2:42 | “*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*”

Reminder: The **building** of the **church** is not the mission of God; instead, God built a **church** to join him in His cosmic **mission**. (Eph. 1:9)

Eph. 1:9 | “*...he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*”

1. In effective partnerships **relationality** and missionality are **proportional**. (see reverse side)

2. Effective partnerships are intentional about **moving** past **goodwill trust** to further stages of trust.

Four Types of Trust:

1. Goodwill
2. Contribution*
3. Behavioral
4. Symbiotic

3. In effective partnerships **junior** and **senior** members of the partnership are defined. (Acts 15)

*Define your contributions (competencies) both individually, organizationally, and culturally.
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