

Introduction:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**, ESV).

I am super excited. Today, we opened a new chapter of in the life of this congregation by appointing an additional shepherd and several additional deacons. This coming week, we’ll be turning the page in this new chapter by adding another full-time worker. Andrew Roberts, one of my best friends, will be joining the work in the middle of this week. His family will be following him at the end of the month once school is completed in Tennessee. This has been a long process as almost this time last year we started working on making this week a reality. As we prepare for the Roberts family to arrive, I thought I’d explain why I’m so excited about this step.

Discussion:

I. Following in the footsteps of the New Testament.

- A. Though more and more churches here in the states are starting to branch into a multi-worker arrangement, it hasn’t been the norm. However, it was very common to have multiple workers together in the New Testament.
- B. Jesus and the Apostles
 1. In **Mark 6:7-13**, when Jesus sent out the apostles on what we commonly refer to as the Limited Commission, He didn’t send them out to work alone. He sent them out two by two. He understood that two are better than one.
 2. In **Luke 10:1**, when Jesus sent out the 72 (some translations say 70), He didn’t send them to do the work individually. He sent them out by twos.
- C. Apostolic travels
 1. When the Holy Spirit set apart preachers to travel and spread the gospel from Antioch, He didn’t just set apart one man, he set apart partners: Paul and Barnabas (**Acts 13:2**).
 2. When Paul and Barnabas later had a disagreement and went their separate ways, they didn’t go off individually. Rather, both of them grabbed another partner and took their respective trips; Barnabas and John Mark to Cyprus (**Acts 15:39**); Paul and Silas to through Syria and Cilicia (**Acts 15:40**).
- D. Local churches
 1. I don’t think we would say every congregation in the New Testament had multiple fully supported workers. However, some important ones did.
 2. The Jerusalem Church: In **Acts 2:42**, we see that the new Christians were devoted to the apostles’ teaching. Further, in **Acts 6:4**, we see that they were fully devoted to the Word and prayer. There were 12 of them.
 3. The Antioch Church: In **Acts 13:1**, the Antioch church had seven men devoted to the teaching and preaching. Because they had so many, they were able to take two of them, Paul and Barnabas, and send them on a missionary journey.
- E. I am excited because this is an authorized way to conduct our work and shows growth and need.

II. Filling out our discipleship circle

- A. Some feel like two preachers is a good number because there are two sermons preached each Sunday. To be honest, I’m not excited because of the divide over the pulpit. If all we were concerned about is preaching two sermons per week, I could continue to do that. And while we will be splitting the pulpit work evenly, that is not why we are seeking another worker. In fact, even if we only had one sermon per week, I believe we would still need at least another fulltime worker.
- B. We need this because we need to finish filling our discipleship circle.
 1. Most of you are aware of our discipleship circle. Allow me to remind you. We have recognized that a disciple is someone who honors God, learns from God, loves like God, and points others to God all while

abiding in God's Word. As such, when we strive to fulfill God's command to go into the world and make disciples (**Matthew 28:19-20**), we aren't simply interested in getting people baptized. We want them to grow and become stronger and stronger disciples. We know that means walking them around this discipleship circle.

2. So, we are implementing processes in the congregation to support these steps. In order to develop disciples who honor God, we have our Sunday assemblies. In order to develop disciples who learn from God, we have our weekly classes. When we developed this discipleship circle, we realized we didn't have any processes for the other two parts of our circle. Over the last year and a half, we have been working on step #3. We have established our House-to-House Meetings to help disciples learn to love like God. But even with all that work and with some effort in evangelism, we still haven't populated our fourth step with a specific process. Right now, pointing others to God is kind of a nebulous concept that we recommend and encourage but don't have a plan for.
- C. This is one of the reasons we need another fulltime worker. We need someone who is able to devote time to helping us populate the fourth quadrant of our discipleship circle. I am excited to tell you that Andrew and I have already been in many conversations about this. We have batted around ideas and I am convinced he has a winner of an idea. He'll have more to say in time, but he plans to spend the next six months working on some tools that will fill this quadrant while I continue to develop and improve our quadrant 3 plans with H2H. Of course, don't wait for those tools. If you have contacts and prospects, invite them to study, invite them to our assemblies, invite them to pray. But get ready, because by the beginning of 2017, we plan to have this quadrant filled with exciting tools and processes for everyone who wants to point others to God to get to work doing so.

III. Two are better than one

- A. We started the lesson by reading **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**. And I want to end there as well. I'm excited about this new arrangement because of that very first statement the preacher made about two being better than one. Two have a good reward for their toil. The interesting point is that when people start to work together, pulling in the same direction, their output and work doesn't increase additively or even multiplicatively. It increases exponentially. With the ability to bounce ideas off each other, support each other, lift up each other, lead each other, two can accomplish more together than they can separately.
- B. This additional will improve my output and work (and Andrew's as well) in three ways.
 1. By dividing up some of the tasks that I am already doing, it will allow us to do what we are doing now even better.
 2. Because two of us are working on it, it will allow us to do more of what we are doing now even better.
 3. By sharing the burden, it will actually pave the way to do new things that will improve the work as a whole.
- C. Additionally, many believe that final comment in the Preacher's list in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** about the three-fold cord actually refers to God being part of the relationship. That may well be. Whether or not that was Solomon's particular point, I am excited because Andrew and I have already made plans to make sure God is part of our relationship. We know disciples will not be developed because of us, but because of God. As **I Corinthians 3:5-9** explains, we are merely servants who plant and water as God gives opportunity. He provides the growth and the increase.

Conclusion:

Andrew Roberts is a godly man. He is a hard worker. I've known him for more than a decade. Though we haven't worked at the same congregation, we have already been fellow-workers from afar. I am excited to draw those bonds of kinship and work tighter. And I am excited about what this means for the growth of this congregation and for you. Please spend a great deal of time this week and in the weeks and years to come in prayer for Andrew and me. Pray for the work in this congregation. Pray for God's glory and pray for more disciples.