

The Type Of Man No Congregation Can Do Without

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Introduction:

- A. Every person within a congregation plays a vital role in its functioning and well being**
 - 1. “No man is an island” is especially true when it comes to serving God!
 - 2. Each one of us brings different characteristics, backgrounds, and abilities into this congregation which meets here: **(I Cor. 12:18-21)**
 - a. While separately we may be seen as an individual – together we become ONE!
 - b. Each person is necessary to the success and unity of the group → Even those which may be considered to be weaker **(vs. 22)**
 - 3. There is not one of the members here, no matter how small of a role you may consider yourself to play, that this congregation can do without! Each one is needed!
- B. There is an individual we read about in the First Century church that every congregation needs more of – His name was Barnabas:**
 - 1. His real name was Joses; however he was better known by the apostles and other Christians by Barnabas because of the constant encouragement he provided
 - 2. Barnabas understood what being a Christian & member of the Lord’s body was all about!
 - 3. While every person plays a crucial role in the life of a congregation, every one of us should strive to have the character of Barnabas in each one of us:
 - a. This is not just for men! I know of just as many women who could be called a Barnabas as I know men
 - b. Being an encourager is something that EVERYONE can do!
 - c. We need to do as Paul encouraged the disciples to do: **(Phil. 3:17)**
 - 4. **Illustration: The Flying Disciplines Of Geese** (given by Betty Burch)

I. Before Showing The Impact Of Barnabas Let Us Look Into The Type Of Person He Was:

- A. Barnabas was the type of individual we all would want around us because he was all about encouraging others in the Lord: (Acts 4:36)**
 - 1. From this point on you will not read of Joses in the Bible, his new nickname “Barnabas” sticks and it is by this name that he will be known and referred to as
 - 2. No doubt the apostles picked this technique up from their Master Teacher – Jesus Christ!
 - a. Jesus, looking at Simon, saw something greater in him and called him Cephas (Peter) which means “a stone” **(John 1:42)**
 - b. Jesus, seeing in James and John a “booming” character nicknamed them “the sons of thunder” **(Mark 3:17)**
 - c. Jesus even nicknamed the Pharisees: Hypocrites & Blind Guides! **(Mt. 23:13, 24)**
 - 3. So when the apostles look down on Joses and call him “Barnabas” (Son of Encouragement) they are paying him one awesome compliment!
 - a. They saw something EXTRA-ORDINARY in this man!
 - b. They saw man who was more about encouraging others than anyone else they knew in the church!
- B. Barnabas was not just a person with a positive attitude:**
 - 1. When someone was needed to be with new Christians they immediately chose Barnabas!
 - a. They saw more in him than the encouragement he offered: **(Acts 11:24)**
 - b. There are three things noteworthy about Barnabas here: He was a good man, he was full of the Holy Spirit, and he was full of faith!
 - 2. Barnabas was a STRONG Christian! He was the man for the job!

C. While there isn't a very that specifies it, when you look at the life of Barnabas you cannot help but to see an extremely humble man!

1. Apart from Jesus Christ, what person do we read most of in the New Testament? PAUL!
 - a. But it was Barnabas who first introduced Paul to the church and it was Barnabas who went with Paul on his missionary journeys
 - b. Barnabas seems to have been a very well respected, trusted, and known man in the church and yet his prominence gives way to Paul
2. As he starts traveling with Paul we see Barnabas take the backburner and Paul step to the forefront:
 - a. When we first read of their work they are mainly referred to as "Paul and Barnabas" or vice versa (**Acts. 13:7**); however, as time progressed much of the attention was given to Paul (**vs. 13**)
 - b. It would take a humble man who's sole interest is to see the cause of Christ roll on to be able to step aside to watch someone like Paul take the forefront

D. So understanding these things it comes as no surprise that when the Lord had work He needed done, He singled out Barnabas to carry that work out! (Acts 13:1-2**)**

1. The Lord knew what kind of man Barnabas was and that the zealotry of Saul (later to become Paul) would be the perfect match for him! An awesome TEAM!
2. What a great compliment was paid when God said, "I WANT YOU!"

II. Barnabas Was Willing To Share With Others When They Had Need:

A. It was after his sacrificial sharing with others who were in need that he nicknamed, "The Son of Encouragement"! (Acts 4:32-37**)**

1. A great number of Jews were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost:
 - a. While at Pentecost many heard the message of the gospel of Christ preached
 - b. Having obeyed the gospel many seemed to have stayed there in Jerusalem to learn more about serving the Lord → Many would have great needs!
 - c. It was because of this and other needs that the disciples were driven to do this!
2. There were many others who did this, why name only Barnabas specifically?
 - a. Probably because he led the way in what they were doing!
 - b. Barnabas had an intense sense of being of one heart and soul with the other believers in Jerusalem! → This led him and the others to share what they had
 - c. Effects: Without a central meeting house, in spite of persecution, and in spite of they had to give up → They clung to one another and they clung to the Lord!
3. What a wonderful way for Barnabas to be introduced to us as we study through Acts:
 - a. What we see here is a man who was not selfish by any measure!
 - b. He felt a much greater connection and loyalty to his new brethren in the Lord than he did for any physical thing which he owned!
 - c. Here's a man who would gladly sacrifice anything for his TRUE family!
4. Adding to the appreciation for what Barnabas did is the fact that he was Levite!

B. This example Barnabas leaves us calls us to deeply examine ourselves:

1. If a need such as what arose in Jerusalem presented itself here, would we be as willing as Barnabas and the others to give up what we own to take care of one another?
 - a. Such an idea isn't so far removed to those who went through the depression
 - b. It may be that we do not face such a need that would cause us to sell our land and houses → But what about giving up luxuries or inconveniencing ourselves?
2. This is the point where the rubber meets the road! (**James 2:15-16**)
 - a. Taking care of one another in this manner will mean that we go out of our way to help and thus calling for sacrifices on our part!
 - b. In order to do this we will have to have others put above ourselves, the kingdom first in our lives, and a realization that the things here are just temporary!

3. The wonderful effect that such generosity had on the disciples 2,000 years ago can be worked in us if we are willing to do the same: **(2 Cor. 9:11-15)**

III. Barnabas Was There For Others As They Obeyed The Gospel:

A. Some who were taught in Jerusalem went back home to Antioch preaching the gospel and a great number of people began turning to the Lord

1. Because of the great number of new disciples there, the Jerusalem Christians decided to send Barnabas to them:
 - a. We aren't very surprised that they would have chosen him!
 - b. Who better to send than the man who is the epitome of encouragement!
2. **Acts 11:22-23**
 - a. The positive impact Barnabas had on this congregation shines in this passage:
 - 1) Upon arrival he looks around and the scripture says, "He was glad!"
 - 2) He encourages the disciples to continue with the Lord – STICK TO IT!
 - b. The encouragement Barnabas had to offer them would have been vital!
→ They would face persecution from the Jews, rejection by friends and family, and maybe even death!
 - c. It was this particular group of disciples that first were called Christians! **(vs. 26)**
 - d. This group of Christians went from being non-existent to being a SOLID group from which Paul's missionary journeys originated
 - 1) Barnabas even went and got Saul (Paul) to come and help him here
 - 2) You might call this Paul's first regular evangelistic work!
3. What a wonderful thing it is that wherever Barnabas went to encourage Christians, those who weren't Christians flocked to turn to the Lord! **(vs. 24-25)**
 - a. It doesn't appear that his purpose in going there was particularly to reach out to the lost, but that's exactly what happened when he was there!
 - b. This just goes to show that when people see something good that those involved are excited about & are encouraging one another in, they want to be part of it!

B. Something That Is Badly Needed Within This Congregation And Any Other Is For Us To Encourage One Another Particularly As People Turn To The Lord (Or Return)

1. When someone decides to begin walking with the Lord it is not an easy time:
 - a. Sometimes one needs this encouragement because they have struggles that just don't disappear when they obey the gospel!
 - b. Sometimes they need encouragement because they will face rejection from family members or friends for obeying the gospel
 - c. Sometimes obedience to Christ means a complete change in lifestyle → like recreation, job situations, or even family life!
2. We need to be certain to be there for people as they turn to the Lord to encourage them to, as Barnabas said, "continue with the Lord"
 - a. I believe that this is the point of the Hebrew writer: **(Heb. 10:25)**
 - a. Someone once put it this way, "STAY IN IT!"
 - b. Whether a "babe in Christ" or a "seasoned" Christian, we all need this reminder!
3. One of the wonderful things about being part of the body of Christ is that when we go through difficult times we can all be there for one another! **(Eph. 4:16)**
4. There is also a need to encourage one another in growth in the word of God:
 - a. The job of bringing someone to Christ does not end at baptism... that is really a beginning point!
 - b. Paul told Timothy to teach others so that they could teach others: **(2 Tim. 2:2)**
 - c. This is just as much part of the great commission as baptism! **(Mark 16:16)**

IV. Barnabas Encouraged Other People When Others Would Have Rejected Them:

A. When others were scared and would have rejected him, Barnabas encouraged Saul of Tarsus by bringing him personally to the congregation:

1. It is quite understandable that the early Christians were skeptical when they heard the news that Saul of Tarsus was now a believer in Christ and His resurrection:
 - a. Remember that Saul played a role in the stoning martyrdom of Stephen – one of the Christians at Jerusalem: **(Acts 7:58; 8:1)**
 - b. After this event Saul zealous made it a point to destroy the Lord's cause **(Acts 8:3)**
 - c. He was even on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians who were at the synagogues when the Lord appeared to him **(Acts 9:1-2)**
2. Can you imagine what was going through the minds of the Christians in Jerusalem when Paul went to join himself to them?
 - a. Those in Damascus were AMAZED that he was even the same man! **(Acts 9:21)**
 - b. When he gets back to Jerusalem they were scared of him! **(Acts 9:26)**
3. Seeing this situation Barnabas puts his great encouraging ability to work! **(Acts. 9:27-28)**
 - a. There was a great amount of risk involved here for Barnabas! Not only was he risking his own personal safety but he also risked the trust and faith others had in him and the safety of the disciples there in Jerusalem!
 - b. Think about this for a moment: What if Barnabas had refused to encourage Saul and the other disciples?

B. When Paul would have nothing to do with bringing John Mark along, it was Barnabas who stuck up for John Mark:

1. When they were in Pamphylia, John Mark had left their company and went back home and evidently Paul was still upset over his decision: **(Acts 15:36-39)**
 - a. Paul was not necessarily wrong for not wanting to take John Mark, he had a good reason, & Barnabas wasn't wrong in wanting him → A matter of opinion!
 - b. Barnabas must have seen something in John Mark that Paul could not see at the moment so Barnabas stood firm in his plans.
2. The decision he made to encourage John Mark by giving him one more chance proves to be a very important thing:
 - a. When Paul was imprisoned in Rome he asked for him by name **(2 Tim 4:11)**
 - b. This leaves no doubt that whatever shakiness was in John Mark before was now gone → What if Barnabas never gave him that second chance?

C. We need to be there to encourage one another in the Lord, even if others might not:

1. It should be our goal to bring the lost to the Lord without regard for who they are, what circumstance they may be in, or even how others might look at us:
 - a. The point of "The Great Commission" → Go to EVERY person! **(Mark. 16:15-16)**
 - b. It is not our job to decide who will respond to the gospel **(I Cor. 1:26)**
 - c. Our job is to plant the seed, God will give the increase! **(I Cor. 3:6-7)**
2. Encourage others who have been forgiven by the Lord when others may still be looking at them with skeptical eyes:
 - a. Corinthians had a problem with holding a matter against a brother who had been forgiven already! **(2 Cor. 2:6-8)**
 - b. If the Lord has forgiven someone, why can't we? It is not our job to second guess or to constantly remind one another of our shortcomings
 - c. Things can be hard enough as they are... we need to encourage one another!

Conclusion:

- ~ We are about to sing an invitation song. Sometimes we call it a "song of encouragement." The purpose of this song is to encourage anyone who needs to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ to do so. Why don't you give your life over to Him today?