

Teamwork in Tasks and Ministry

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One of the greatest tasks that faced Jesus was the feeding of the four thousand near the Sea of Galilee. Chapter 8 in the book of Mark verses 1-9, illustrates several principles that we can apply to our own tasks and ministries that God has given to us in this new year.

1. Jesus made His needs and His feelings known; He didn't try to "go it alone." Verses 1 & 2 show how Jesus called His closest friends; His disciples, and shared His personal feelings; "I have compassion on the multitude" and His feelings for the multitude; "If I send them away hungry, they will faint on the way." Be vulnerable with your feelings about tasks with those you can trust. This will prevent feelings from becoming too powerful or oppressive.
2. Be open to feedback from loved ones, and even their questions and doubts. The disciples asked; "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"(vs. 4) Resist the temptation to interpret loved ones' doubts and questions as evidence against your ideas. Rather, try to understand their willingness to risk questioning and sharing their own feelings with you, as evidence of their connectedness with you and their comfort level with you.
3. Ask God for His orderliness in the task and then break the task down into smaller increments. Verse 6 states; "So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground." The disciples "sitting" very likely gave a sense of order and peace to the task. Then, Jesus helped His disciples tackle one thing at a time; "First, the disciples set before them the loaves, and then, the disciples set before them, the fish."
4. Allow others to "own" part of the task. Jesus could have exclusively used His own divine resources to feed the four thousand, but He instead asked His disciples for help. Asking for help can be honoring and encouraging to others. This would include asking children for help with household chores!
5. Give thanks to God for the task or ministry. "And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks" (vs. 6). When we are thankful to God, even in spite of the magnitude of the task, it opens up these divine resources from God to us.
6. Practice "give and take" with others in ministry. Jesus alternates between "*taking*" the loaves and fish to "*giving*" them to His disciples in order to feed the people. A marathon runner sometimes carries the

baton, but then needs to hand it off to a teammate. So can we, in tasks and ministry, ask God for wisdom for when to carry the load, and when to hand it off to someone else.

7. “Now those who had eaten were four thousand. And He sent them away” (vs.9). Ending a task takes Godly discernment, a willingness to “let go” and humility. Ending a task can also open the door to new tasks that God may have for you, but may also allow others a chance to experience growth and satisfaction in your former ministry. It can also prevent burnout! For example, in her book, Open Heart, Open Home, Karen Mains speaks of times when it may be necessary to roll up the welcome mat in the ministry of hospitality.

The Lord cares deeply about our emotions, the involvement of others, and all of the specifics in our various kingdom endeavors while living out our ministry time on earth. Mark chapter 8 vs. 9, states; “So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.” Jesus yearns for us to be filled, not depleted, by the things He has given us to do. Furthermore, as we practice Jesus’ model in tasks and ministry, watch for a delightful basket of leftovers in our lives! This basket of leftovers will be different for each person, but be assured that it will be a spilling over of an extra measure of His grace, goodness, and love to you.

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