

YOUR PART IS NOT THE ONLY PART
By Robert J. Tamasy

There is a tendency, when circumstances become especially challenging, for many of us to reason that the outcome is solely dependent on us. As one motivational speaker used to say, "If it's to be, it's up to me!" However, unless you are an entrepreneur and the only employee in your company, there will always be others involved in the successes – and failures – of your organization. Everyone, from the receptionist to the salespeople to the janitor to the CEO, contributes to the ultimate result.

I remember my days as a magazine editor for CBMC. I was the primary writer, but we also had people contributing columns on various topics. I had an associate editor and editorial assistant. We had a graphic designer and illustrators who worked to make our publication visually compelling. Then there were the people at the publishing company who did the work of getting the magazine into printed form.

Each time we received a freshly printed, new edition of the magazine, I would come to the same conclusion: *The whole (product) was greater than the sum of the parts.* This process, utilizing the gifts, talents and experience of each person involved, reminded me of a statement in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

The context is referring to the Church, the "body of Christ" as the Bible expresses it. But in principle it also can apply to any workplace setting. The entire passage is well worth reading and pondering, but here are some excerpts from it:

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.... But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as she wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...."

These verses also refer to the parts of the body that do not get as much attention as others. When we look at someone, whether their physical appearance or the work they perform, we tend to favor those who are most attractive or produce the greatest results. However, the passage reminds us:

"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other."

Another passage in the Scriptures speaks to the importance of relying on one another rather than thinking we can accomplish all the work on our own. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 states:

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“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls, his friend can help him up. But pity the person who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

The next time you experience a significant accomplishment at work, remember all who helped to make it possible.

© 2023. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How many people work at your company or organization? What are some of the roles and responsibilities they perform? What would be the impact if they failed to do their respective jobs?
2. If you are involved with a team of people on a specific project, how do you all typically respond when the work is accomplished? Do you “share the glory,” or do certain individuals get the credit without acknowledging the contributions of others? What is the impact of that response?
3. What have you done personally – or what can you do – to recognize the value of people who are not on the “front lines” but make important contributions to the achievement of your team's or organization's mission?
4. One verse cited above says, “a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” Have you noticed that a piece of thread or string might be easily broken, and two pieces might be snapped with a little effort as well. But by intertwining three or more strands, the “cord” becomes extremely difficult to break. What does that say about how we work together with others?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 27:17; Mark 6:7; Acts 13:2-3, 14:1-3; Philipians 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:15-18