

Two Are Better Than One

What is the SMALLEST NUMBER of Christians needed to have a church?

It's pretty difficult to come to any number other than two. "Where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." Mt. 18:20. There would be great benefit if we began to say that the first (certainly not the only) expression of church involves two believers. These would be called "Churches of Two". (Jewish tradition teaches that 10 men were required for a synagogue to meet. This is called a minyan or quorum. Some scholars believe that Jesus was defining His minyan in Mt. 18:20. Only two or three are required. And they don't have to be men!)

Why Is This Important?

Because the functioning (or non functioning) of this first expression of church has huge implications for the health (or non health) of larger expressions of the church (house churches, etc.). The same is true in our physical bodies. If all of the cells in our liver are healthy and functioning properly, then there is a good chance that our liver will be healthy. On the other hand, if some of the cells are not healthy or not functioning properly, our liver may have some problems. If the smallest expressions of church are healthy and functioning properly, the larger expression of church will experience much greater health.

What Are The Functions of a Church of Two (or Three)?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 gives us four vital functions that can be accomplished in a church of this size. Perhaps Jesus had this passage in mind when talked about 2 or 3 gathered in His name. Perhaps He had it in mind when he sent out the 72 by twos to plant churches in Luke 10:1. The foundational idea: "Two are better than one". (v. 9) Why?

Four Reasons

1. Fruitfulness in ministry. "Because they have a good return for their work" (v. 9). Often two working together can be more productive than two working apart. The whole is more than the sum of the parts - even if there are only two parts. The power of synergy. "This is to my Father's glory, that you (plural) bear much fruit." (Jn. 15:8)
2. Overcoming failure. "If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!" (v. 10) "We all stumble in many ways." (Jam 3:2) What if there is no one close enough to know what has happened? What if there is no one that we trust enough to take their hand? The person alone may end up staying down for a long time.
3. Zeal. "Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? (v. 11). The word "to be zealous" (zeo) means to boil, sizzle, to be

hot. Two together can stir up spiritual fervor in each other. One alone may much more easily grow cold. "Never lacking in zeal." (Rom. 12:11)

4. Spiritual warfare. "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves." (v. 12). "Resist the devil" (James 4:7) is a plural command. Living the Christian life alone is an invitation to be overpowered by the Enemy.

House church is not the smallest expression of church. That distinction belongs to the Church of Two. In fact, these groups of two people, walking closely together, living out the four functions listed above are meant be the building blocks for a healthy house church. Imagine if everyone in your house church was walking closely with one other people and implementing the four functions from Ecc. 4. What difference would it make?