

Devoted to Strategic Relationships

Most of the New Testament books were written as letters. Most of these letters were written to churches within cities, and some were written to leaders of these churches – Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

In every letter of the New Testament is a hidden story about relationships.

- Relationships between the author and his first readers.
- Relationships between the readers and outsiders.
- Relationships between all readers and God.

Many letters were written in part to repair broken relationships or fortify strategic relationships.

Colossians is a perfect example of this. And the last chapter highlights it.

Col. 4:2-5 NIV

v.2 Devote yourselves to **prayer**...

v.3 Pray for us, too, that God may **open a door** for our message...

v.5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **make the most of every opportunity**.

Devote yourself to Prayer.

Devote yourself to Reaching Outsiders.

Devote yourself to **Strategic Relationships**.

Note: there are 11 strategic relationships identified by Paul...

Colossians 4:7-18 NIV **Tychicus** will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear (beloved) brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8** I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9** He is coming with **Onesimus**, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. **10** My fellow prisoner **Aristarchus** sends you his greetings, as does **Mark**, the cousin of **Barnabas**. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11** Jesus, who is called **Justus**, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a **comfort to me**. **12** **Epaphras**, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. **13** **I vouch for him** that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. **14** Our dear friend **Luke**, the doctor, and **Demas** send greetings. **15** Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to **Nympha** and the church in her house. **16** After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. **17** Tell **Archippus**: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." **18** I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

2 Timothy 4:10 NIV for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica...

"See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.

Four Types of Strategic Relationships

1) **Spiritual Father (Mother)**.

Col 3:11) Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Philemon v.8-12 NIV Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, **9** yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—**10** that I appeal to you for **my son Onesimus**, who **became my son** while I was in chains. **11** Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. **12** I am sending him—who is **my very heart**—back to you.

v16-19 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. **17** So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he has done you any **wrong** or **owes you** anything, **charge it to me**. **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.

What do Fathers offer?

- i) Fathers are Comforters – they will affirm and endorse you.
- ii) Fathers are Experienced – they speak from their past.
- iii) Fathers are Secure –they strengthen us out of their authority.

Everybody Needs a Paul.

2) Spiritual Sons (Daughters).

- i) In the kingdom of God, Great Leaders are made from Great Followers.

Everybody Needs a Paul

Everybody Needs a Timothy

3) Faithful Friends.

- i) In v11 says they have *proved to be a comfort to him*.
- b) *Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.* NIV
 - i) Friends are faithful – they will not abandon you when trouble comes.
 - ii) Friends are empathetic – they understand you and enter into your sorrow.
 - iii) Friends are just friends – they love you for who you are and that is encouraging.

James 5:16 Therefore **confess** your sins to each other and **pray** for each other so **that you may be healed**. The prayer of a **righteous** man is powerful and effective. NIV

Everybody Needs a Paul

Everybody Needs a Timothy

Everybody Needs a Barnabas

4) Unsaved and Unchurched Friends. (outsiders)

- (1) I can hear the Apostle Paul's words: v.5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Everybody Needs a Paul. --- A Father

Everybody Needs a Timothy --- Spiritual Sons and Daughters

Everybody Needs a Barnabas --- Faithful Friends

Everybody Needs an Onesimus --- Unsaved and Unchurched Friends