



## Christian Life and Ministry

Throughout Paul’s life and ministry, he often served with a team of Christians. There would be disciples who would have prayed for him, supported him financially, encouraged him, joined him in his missionary trips, or visited him in prison. That shows Paul’s priorities in how to serve God and proclaim the Gospel message – not alone, but together with a team of Christians. God’s calling on us as Christians is not up to us to do it by ourselves, but each of us has a part to play within a team of people in fulfilling God’s mandate to us.

In the final section of Paul’s letter to Timothy, we read of Paul’s anguish over those who did not persevere in their faith and deserted Paul in his ministry. However, we also read of all the other Christians who did continue to pray, support, serve, and encourage Paul. This is an example to us all in our Christian life – that we do not obey God or fulfill his calling for us without the help of Christians around us.

### Launch

- 1) Who are some of the Christians who have helped you in fulfilling God’s calling in your life as a spouse, parent, colleague or friend?

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Read 2 Timothy 4:9-22.

- 2) Take the time to list out all the characters and summarise what they did for/against Paul:

<u>Character</u>	<u>What They Did</u>
- Demas	- Loved the world, deserted Paul, and gone to Thessalonica



- 3) What are some things that we can learn from the characters that served and helped Paul?
  
- 4) What is the common theme of the characters that deserted Paul? (v10, 14-15)
  - a. How did Paul respond to those who did that? (v16-18)
  
  - b. What was Paul's goal in his ministry? (v17)
  
  - c. What can we learn from Paul's response when there are people in our team (whether it's in Christian ministry or not) who has "deserted" us?
  
- 5) How should we understand v18, given that we know historically speaking that Paul died shortly after writing this letter? (cf. 2 Tim 4:6-8)
  
- 6) How can we support the Christian ministry team around us? How can others support us in our daily Christian ministry, whether it is at church, work, school etc.?

## Conclusion

Paul was supported by a team of people in his ministry. These support ranges from prayer to simple physical needs. Christian ministry is never done alone, but always within a team of people. There are a variety of ways that we can encourage and support each other in our daily Christian ministry – be it from a simple physical provision, to prayer, to financial support. On the other hand, as humans, we are all still sinful, and therefore it is not surprising to find that there were people who deserted Paul in his ministry. If that happened to Paul, then it should not surprise us when that happens to us. However, notice that Paul never got resentful and bitter about it. Rather, he entrusts the situation and the people to God himself (v16), always trusting and looking to Christ to give him strength.

There is much that we can learn from Paul's example. In our daily ministry, we are supported by and supporting one another. Christian ministry is not confined to what we do at church, but rather how we can serve God in all the circumstances of life that God has placed us in. It could be the hospital, office, school, café, trades, or construction site etc. Our goal in all of those places is that "the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it." How that looks like may be different in each of those places, but the goal is always the same – so that more people will come to know Christ, to the glory of God. How are you supporting others to do that, and what support do you think you'll need to do that in your own life and circumstance?