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# Leadership is a Team Sport

I feel like the most blessed person on this planet. The reason? I have the incredible privilege of leading *Truth At Work* roundtable groups in my region in which Christian business and ministry leaders gather together once per month for four hours. These groups (*usually consisting of 8-15 leaders*) act like a board of advisors to one another in helping each member to grow their organizations in a God-honoring way while at the same time challenging and encouraging one another to grow personally and spiritually. I have the privilege of leading six groups each month, and it is an incredible thing to be a part.

In the six years I've been doing this, one thing has become even more apparent to me: We were not meant to do life alone... especially as leaders! Yet, most leaders do. Sure, we may have Facebook friends and Twitter followers. We might have a lengthy list of acquaintances and maybe even a few friends we consider "close." However, leaders rarely have relationships with people who "get them" as a leader. Let's face it, leadership is a lonely place. And being a leader who follows Jesus can mean loneliness at a whole new level.

This shouldn't surprise us as 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that our enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. The Greek word for devil is *diabolos*. One of the meanings of *diabolos* is to divide. So we need to understand that one of our enemy's primary ploys is to isolate us. Think about the times in your life when things go sideways. What is your natural tendency? If you're like most, it is to hunker down (*alone*) until the storm passes. I don't want to be a bother to anyone else. I don't really need any help. These, and other excuses for not connecting with others, are lies from our enemy.

Whenever I watch a lion hunting a zebra on television, I always see the lion chasing the zebra that's by itself. This is because the lone zebra is the weak one. Leaders must learn from this truth. To compound the issue further, as you rise up the ladder a funny thing happens: fewer and fewer people will actually tell you the truth. As a leader, the truth is your friend and is necessary for you to lead effectively. So if you lead others, it is imperative that you surround yourself with trusted advisers, for your sake and for the sake of those you lead. I'm talking about confidantes who, because of their own leadership experience, understand the pressures of leadership. They've earned the right to provide a kick in the pants when needed and can offer heartfelt support when the going gets tough. While this is not an exhaustive list, here are seven reasons to assemble a group like this:

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1. You have a greater chance of making better decisions with others around you. (*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. Proverbs 15:22*)

2. Having other trusted people around to help can bring victory in the battles you face as a leader. (*For waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers. Proverbs 24:6*)

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3. There are times in leadership when you need encouragement to press on and to do what is right. *(But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Hebrews 3:13)*

4. You can grow more as a leader when you allow others to hold you accountable to doing what you need to do. *(As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17)*

5. Finding a safe and confidential place to share your deepest burdens and struggles with others who care about you can bring healing to your soul. *(Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:16a)*

6. You have something to offer other leaders to help them grow. *(Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:4-5)*

7. Being a lonely leader is exhausting. After their first meeting, new Truth At Work members frequently say, *"I feel like a big weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I don't feel so alone anymore!" (Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)*

Obviously, surrounding yourself with others is wise. Even if your team doesn't physically do anything in the moment, knowing they are there can often make you feel stronger as this story shows:

*A man was lost while driving through the country. As he tried to read a map, he accidentally drove off the road into a ditch. Though he wasn't injured, his car was stuck deep in the mud. So the man walked to a nearby farm to ask for help.*

*"Warwick can get you out of that ditch," said the farmer, pointing to an old mule standing in a field. The man looked at the haggardly mule and looked at the farmer who just stood there repeating, "Yep, old Warwick can do the job."*

*The man figured he had nothing to lose. The two men and Warwick made their way back to the ditch. The farmer hitched the mule to the car. With a snap of the reins he shouted, "Pull, Fred! Pull, Jack! Pull, Ted! Pull, Warwick!" And the mule pulled the car from the ditch with very little effort.*

*The man was amazed. He thanked the farmer, patted the mule and asked, "Why did you call out all those other names before you called Warwick?"*

*The farmer grinned and said, "Old Warwick is just about blind. As long as he believes he is part of a team, he doesn't mind pulling."*

*So who's on your team?*

**Action step:** Find a group of trusted people (or some individuals) and ask them if they'd be willing to speak into your life, to point out your blind spots and to encourage you. If you do this, I promise you that you will feel a weight lifted and your influence as a leader will increase.

Jim Lange, a CCA supplier member, serves as president of 5feet20 (5feet20.com), a ministry that provides personalized magazines to help doctors easily, effectively and consistently encourage and affect the spiritual health of their patients. For more information and to learn how to receive a free gift that is only available to CCA members, go to [5feet20.com/cca](http://5feet20.com/cca). He is also the award-winning author of *Calming the Storm Within: How to Find Peace in This Chaotic World* ([calmingthestormwithin.com](http://calmingthestormwithin.com)) and the book *Bleedership, Biblical First-Aid for Leaders*.