

AS IRON SHARPENS IRON

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Administrative Bishop Daniel Hampton

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Phillip Melanchthon is one of the most important figures in church history, and most Christians have never heard of him.

He was a close friend of Martin Luther and someone Luther depended on a great deal as he challenged the doctrine and authority of the Roman Catholic Church. He defended Luther in debates and Luther called on Melanchthon repeatedly as Luther translated the Bible for the first time into the language of the people. Luther led the people into the Reformation with his big presence and worm personality, but Melanchthon was a calm stable presence in his life helping him navigate the more difficult questions. There's a good chance that Luther never would have made it through the challenges he faced without the help of his friend.

D.J. is a pastor friend of mine in another denomination. I have called on him so many times over the years as I contemplated difficult ministry problems and decisions. I have often called him for wisdom in how to act, react, speak, and respond. When there is advice to give he gives it; when there is nothing to say, he listens. Often his advice has been to say nothing and to do nothing! Usually he just listened. I have known D.J. since our time at Lee University (then Lee College) and there's a good chance I never would have made it through Greek class with Dr. Bowdle without his help. I was more interested in preaching revivals than in studying! From the very beginning, D.J. taught me how to serve my brother. He showed me what it means to prefer my brother. I more than once mentioned to D.J. that he had been a better friend to me than I was to him. He lived out 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Then I had an opportunity to serve him as he had served me. He was struggling with a ministry situation and called to vent. I was able to direct him to some resources that spoke directly to what he was going through and how to handle it. The situation turned around to his favor. I tell this story not to boast, but to point out how much more fulfilling it was for me to be there for D.J. with answers than it was for me to receive his support as well as to suggest that both were powerful moments for me.

Who are you pouring into? How often do you offer to serve your brother or sister, and what do you do with the opportunity when it arises? It is important for us each to have someone we can confide in, and someone we act as a sounding board *for*. Carefully cultivate the kind of relationships where you can sharpen a fellow believer and be sharpened in return. Pastors are often quick to support another brother, but sometimes don't think they need anyone but Jesus. How foolish! Even Christ pleaded with his closest disciples to watch and pray with him in Gethsemane.

Learn to reach out. Reach out to help and reach out for help. Iron only sharpens Iron when they come into contact in an abrasive situation. We need one another. That's humbling, and maybe that's part of why God designed it that way.



What an honor to know you, you have wore many hats in your 68 years of ministry. God has surely given you a long and blessed life. You have touched so many. A birthday greeting written by Brother Pennington's son Keith sums up the feelings, I'm sure a lot of people feel when they hear the name Ernest Pennington (Brother Pennington).

"We are so thankful for my Dad who is 90 today. His whole life has been filled with helping and ministering to others. We are so proud of what he has done & continues to do with the 90 Years of his life. His life goal is to be in the Harvest Field working for the Lord. He has definitely met that goal. Even now his life of ministry continues as our Heavenly Father gives him strength. Thank you Dad, Papa, for the example you have shown, for the life you have lived and the life that you continue to live. Dad you can truly say like Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

We celebrate you on your 90th Birthday. We love you and we praise God for the blessing you are.

*Congratulations on
Pastoral Appointment
Kevin Hostetler
Parsons Church of God*

*Our sincere condolences to the
family of Helen Ayers
wife of Kenneth Ayers*

**Please continue to check out our
Facebook pages and Website
for updated information on upcoming events.**

Mark your calendar

October 4-8 Fall Gathering
October 10 KidsAdventure Day @ New River Ministry Center
October 16-18 Fall Youth Retreat for Teen and Middle School

Be on the lookout for more information on a Statewide Fall Gathering on October 4-8, a Kids Adventure Day October 10, and a Youth Retreat October 16-18. Please Save these dates and plan to attend. We are still in the planning stages of these events, This is scheduled on a tentative basis, with the current Covid-19 Virus cases up and down it is a fluid situation, and we will know more the closer to the date.

