

# Lessons in Teamwork from Wild Geese

This classic lesson was originally written by Dr. Robert McNeish and delivered as a lay sermon in Northminster Presbyterian Church in Reisterston, MD, in 1972.

Bible verses were added by Dianne McDonnell.

1) As each goose flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the entire flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

*Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of synergy can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are travelling on the trust of one another.*

## **Don't give up on being part of a flock and flying in formation together**

Hebrews 10:25 **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Philippians 2:1-2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, **having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.**

Biblical references are quoted from the New International Version Bible.

2) When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

*Lesson: If we had as much sense as a goose, we would stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We would be willing to accept their help and to give help to others.*

## **Helping brethren in need**

Acts 11:28-30 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability, **decided to provide help** for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

3) When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

*Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills and capabilities, and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.*

### Cooperation without competition

1 Corinthians 3:5-6 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-- **as the Lord has assigned to each his task.** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

### Unique arrangements of gifts

Romans 12:4-6 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. **We have different gifts**, according to the grace given us....

4) The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those in front to keep up their speed.

*Lesson: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement the production is greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's core values and encourage the spirit of others) is the quality of honking we seek.*

1Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore **encourage** one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Hebrews 3:13 But **encourage** one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

5) When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out together with another formation or catch up with the flock.

*Lesson: If we had as much sense as geese did, we would stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.*

Matthew 22:39 And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.'

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Romans 12:10 **Be devoted to one another** in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: **Love one another.** As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this **all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**"