

# A Great Send-Off

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     The 18th of August, a great send-off. Then, after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them, Barnabas and Saul, and sent them off. Acts 13.3 It must have been quite a day in the congregation of Antioch.

We don't know how big the congregation was, but they were an interesting collection of people. They were from different countries, both Jews and non-Jews, and probably had rich and poor people among them.

It was from that group of Christians that Barnabas and Saul, or Paul, left to become missionaries. These two men didn't just decide to go off on their own because they thought it would be a good thing to do.

The Bible tells us they were sent by the congregation. And the congregation didn't just decide that Barnabas and Saul were good men for this job. It was a divine appointment. The people had been praying for guidance, and they were fasting.

They were really serious about this matter of missionary work. In answer to their prayers, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

[ 1 : 0 5 ]     Verse 2 Only then were these men sent off with the blessing of the congregation. What excitement there must have been! And what an encouragement it must have been for Barnabas and Paul to know that they were called by God and supported by their home congregation, who would keep praying for them, during the hard and dangerous work they were being sent to do.

God wants us to pray for those from among us who are called and sent to preach the gospel, whether at home or abroad. And a prayer Dear Lord, help me to be faithful in praying for your servants.

Amen Amen