

# Numbers 4:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers,

## Analysis

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**The families of the sons of Merari**—Named after Levi's youngest son (Genesis 46:11), the Merarites bore the tabernacle's structural framework: boards, bars, pillars, sockets, and pins (4:31-32). Theirs was the foundation work, literally supporting the Kohathites' holy objects and Gershonites' curtains. Without Merarite labor, the entire worship structure would collapse—a vivid picture of how 'lesser' service roles sustain visible ministry.

**Throughout their families, by the house of their fathers**—The genealogical structure ensured multi-generational continuity. Merarite sons learned carpentry and metalwork from fathers and grandfathers, developing expertise in assembling/disassembling the tabernacle efficiently. This apprenticeship model, lost in modern instant-training culture, cultivated deep competency and family legacy in God's service.

## Historical Context

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Merarites camped north of the tabernacle (3:35) and received four wagons and eight oxen for transport (7:8)—double the Gershonites' allocation—reflecting their heavier structural loads. Archaeological parallels show ancient Near Eastern portable shrines required similar framework systems for nomadic worship.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the indispensability of Merarite 'infrastructure' work challenge modern prestige hierarchies that elevate platform ministry over behind-the-scenes service?
2. What value do you see in multi-generational apprenticeship for Christian service, as opposed to individualistic training models?

## Interlinear Text

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וְנִפְאָקֵד יְהוָה	לְמִשְׁפְּחָת	בָּנִים	מִרְאֵי
And those that were numbered	of the families	of the sons	of Merari
H6485	H4940	H1121	H4847
וְנִפְאָקֵד יְהוָה	לְמִשְׁפְּחָת	אֲבָתָם:	לְבֵית
of the families	by the house	of their fathers	
H4940	H1004	H1	

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