

## AFFIRMING THE MINISTRY OF OTHERS

### Romans 16:1-27 Part 33

Jeff Wall

#### Paul's Post Script teaches too!

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Tim 3:16-17 NIV

#### The passage divides it very easily into four sections:

Paul's **Commendations**, v 1-2; **Cordiality**, v. 3-16 21-24; **Caution**, v. 17-20; **Conclusion**

#### I. PAUL'S COMMENDATION (vs. 1-2)

Phoebe *"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in the way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you for she has been a great help to many people including me."* V 1-2

**The ministry of Phoebe** "diakonon" This indicates that this is a position of leadership.

"prostatos" - "a helper - one who gives aid"

#### Typically deaconesses in church history did four things in the New Testament times.

1. They took care of the sick and the poor.
2. They visited the martyrs in prison, providing them food, clothing, correspondence.
3. They participated in baptisms. Often in New Testament churches they would baptize large numbers at once.
4. They ministered to women in general in the church.

#### INSIGHTS:

1. We should accept the ministry of women. *"I commend ... receiver her ..."*
2. We should affirm them and support the ministry of women *"give her any help..."*
3. We should appreciate the ministry of women *"she has been a great help"*  
*"If it is leadership, let him govern diligently."* Rom12:8 The word leadership is the same word used for Phoebe in 16:2. Helper/leader same word

#### II. PAUL'S CORDIALITY (vs. 3-16, 21-24)

There are fascinating stories behind many of these people Paul named.

##### Husband and Wife Team

v. 3 *"Greet Priscilla [or Prisca] and Aquilla, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all of the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them."*

Acts 18:24-26 *"Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus and he was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scripture. He had been instructed in the ways of the Lord and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately though he knew only the baptism of John. [He knew about John the Baptist and a little bit about Jesus.] He began to speak boldly in the synagogue and when Priscilla and Aquilla heard him they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."*

Romans 16. Paul says *"They risked their lives for me."* Paul was always getting in trouble. Somehow Priscilla and Aquilla saved Paul's life.

v. 5 *"Greet the church that meets in their house."*

The New Testament church always met in houses. There were no church buildings for the first 300 years of the church. They met in homes.

v. 5b *"Greet my dear friend Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia."*

### INSIGHTS:

1. The church is people not buildings.
2. Every individual is important.
3. People need praise. They deserve recognition.
4. Greeting each other is a Christian duty.  
v. 16 *"Greet one another with a holy kiss."*

v. 20-24 The greetings Paul gives from the people who are at Corinth. *"Timothy my fellow worker sends his greeting to you as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives."* We read these names and they don't mean a whole lot, but you're going to spend eternity with these guys.

Notice that it says *"I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord."* Paul dictated Romans. Paul had a secretary. The only letter that Paul actually wrote by himself was the book of Galatians. Every other letter he had a secretary. Tertius means "Third". Evidently he was a slave. In the New Testament times, they evidently didn't give slaves names they just numbered them.

*"Gaius whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works and our brother Quartus, sends you their greetings."* Quartus is Tertius' brother. Quartus means "Four". Number One wrote the book, Number Four says "Hi".

Paul is a warm fellow. He sends greetings to everybody. He affirms everybody. He compliments everybody. Man, woman, Greek, Jew or slave. He was an incredible encourager.

**III. PAUL'S CAUTION** You want to make one last parting instruction. What would you choose to say to the church. Whatever is said last is what is going to stick in their mind?

He said promote unity in the church. Don't allow dissent and stay away from those who cause division. Promote harmony. Don't listen to complaints, dissent, division. Don't be a part of it.

*"I urge you brothers [Urge is the same in 12:1 - "I beseech you brothers to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice."] to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teachings you've learned. Keep away from them for such people are not serving our Lord Christ but their own appetites. By their smooth talk and flattery they deceive*

*the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience so I'm full of joy over you but I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil."*

(vs. 17-20)

Keep away from negative people, don't go near them. What do you do with people who are cranks, people who are troublemakers? Avoid them. Don't get near them. They are really just self serving and trying to make themselves look good.

#### **IV. PAUL'S CONCLUSION**

-- a benediction of praise to God. v. 25 *"Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past."* The mystery is that Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ in the church. There is no division. *"It's now been revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God so that all nations might believe and obey."* That is the great purpose of the church. God leaves us here on the earth after we become believers so that we can share with others *"so that all nations might believe and obey."* God wants everybody in His family. *"To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen."* (vs. 25-27)

Prayer:

These folks we've looked at are former days saints, saints from 2000 years ago. Even their lives and what Paul had to say about them and the testimony that carries on for 2000 years, has a message for us. How can I apply this passage to my life?

Pray this in your heart: "Lord, help me to learn to say something good about everybody. That's what Paul did in this passage. Help me to be quick to compliment. To be generous with praise. Help me to give credit where credit is due. Lord, help me accept the ministry of others and to affirm the ministry of others and to appreciate the ministry of others even if its different from mine. Father, help me to be warm and affectionate toward other believers, to express my love. Lord, help me to be a promoter of unity and harmony in our church, to not listen to dissention, but as You've said to keep away from people who cause division and to be a builder of harmony and love in Your body."

Help us to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Heavenly Father, I pray that will be known as, "That's the church where people love. That's a church where you get hugged, where you're appreciated, where people build each other up rather than tearing each other down." Lord, we live in a very cold world and a world where nobody knows their neighbors and few people have close friends. We know that people are looking for love and they're looking for a warm place that they can belong to. We pray that we would reach out with open arms to all the world and say "We care" and "We love." Help us to express it in practical ways. In Jesus' name. Amen.