

Ministry is All About People
Romans 16:1-16

Have you ever glanced over something instead of reading it? Perhaps something like the fine print on a contract, or the items at the beginning of a sign up for something on the internet. Maybe you've even been tempted to glance over certain passages of Scripture, like some of the genealogies in Genesis, of the laws in Leviticus, or this list of greetings in Romans 16. Let me encourage you that there are great truths in this passage of Scripture. Today we want to examine those truths. This chapter provides important insight into the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. It reminds us that when all is said and done, **ministry is all about people**

This chapter provides

- Longest greeting section in the New Testament
- 27 names
- 29 people (if you include “Rufus wife,” and “Nereus sister”)
- These people seem to be divided into four specific categories:
 - ★ **“Workers in the Lord”** (Priscilla, Aquilla, Mary, Urbanus, Trophosa, Trophoeana)
 - ★ **“Paul’s Kinsmen”** “fellow Jews” (Andronicus, Junia, Herodian)
 - ★ **“Beloved in the Lord”** (Ampliatius, Stychus, Persis)
 - ★ **“In the Lord”** (Apelles, Narcissus, Rufus)
- There are 10 women listed here
- Most of the individuals that Paul greets here have NO OTHER NT reference where they appear.
- Some are **NOTABLE**.
 - ★ Epenetus (5b)- the earliest Christian convert in Asia
 - ★ Aristobolus (10b) - possibly the grandson of Herod the Great
 - ★ Narcissus (11b) - wealthy and influential Roman (Mounce, NAC, 277)
- Some are **COMMON**
 - ★ v. 14-16 several names
 - ★ Most were common names
 - ★ Hermes was a common names used for slaves

Our study today will focus on two areas. The first is found in Romans 16:1-5 and three very important people that Paul mentions. After reviewing Paul’s relationship with Phoebe, Aquilla and Priscilla, we will look to this passage to gain principles that can help

us as we consider our relationships with other people as we seek to serve the Lord in His church.

I. Two Highlighted Names

A. Phoebe. Φοίβη Rom 16:1-2

1. Her name means “bright, or radiant” (BKC)
2. Our “sister”
3. **Cenchrea** (Κεγχρεαί). Paul write ROMANS from here
4. **“A servant”** Greek, διάκονος **2 Possible meanings**
 - a. “One who serves”
 - (1) Romans 15:8 *For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs*
 - (2) Romans 13:4 *For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*
 - (3) Mat 20:26; Rom 13:4; 1 Cor 3:5; Eph 6:21; Col 1:23, 25; 1 Tim 4:6
 - b. “Office in the Church”
 - (1) Philippians 1:1 *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and **deacons**:*
 - (2) 1 Timothy 3:8 **Deacons**, *likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.*
 - c. According to 1 Tim 3, this office is a leadership office in the church (for men). “Deaconess” is a servant term. Women who serve the body of Christ
5. “Receive her”
 - a. Most believe that she **carried the letter of Romans** to the church!
 - b. A.M Hunter: *“She carried under her robe the entire future of Christian theology.”* (Quoted by Mounce, NAC, 272)

B. Priscilla and Aquilla.

1. Acts 18:1-4. Met in Corinth on 2nd missionary journey
2. Expelled from Rome when Claudius expelled all Jews in 58 AD over a dispute about the “chrestus.”
3. They are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19
4. Fellow tentmaker
5. **“Risky their lives for me”** (16:4). Possibly during the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19), after the ministry in Corinth.

6. **Extended ministry in Corinth**
7. They returned to ROME
8. Here, they are **no longer** “*my fellow tentmakers.*” They have become “*my fellow workers in Christ Jesus!*”
9. A church met **in their home.**
 - a. Should churches meet in homes?
 - b. Do church buildings ruin the church?
 - c. Article in the Vineland Daily Journal.
 - d. Some of have friends who have chosen to leave the church and we would like to know how to answer them.
 - e. 6 Page article on the website. Copies in back.
10. These were dear friends and ministry partners
 - a. You grow closest to the people you minister with
 - b. Mission trips
 - c. Choir
 - d. Youth workers

II. Six Principles from Romans 16

- A. The importance of Greetings!
 1. Every verse begins with the same word!
 2. “Greeting someone as you enter their house.” (BAGD)
 - a. Matthew 10:12 *As you enter the home, give it your greeting.*
 - b. Luke 1:40 *where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.*
 - c. Acts 21:19 *Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.*
 3. “Warm greetings.” (BAGD) 1 Corinthians 16:19 *The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla **greet you warmly** in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.*
 4. We should greet one another.
 5. Romans 16:16 *Greet one another with a **holy kiss**. All the churches of Christ send greetings.*
- B. Importance of the Local Church.
 1. 16:2. *ekklesia* at Cenchrea. ἐκκλησίας ἐν Κεγχρεας
 2. 16:5. Aquilla and Priscilla. A local church!
 3. The importance of every spiritual gift!

C. Elevation of Women

1. Some view Christians who believe in male leadership as sexist
2. In Paul's day, he was a **revolutionary!**
3. The term "who work hard in the Lord" reserved only for women!
 - a. **Mary** (16:5), **Tryphena, Typhosa, and Persis** (16:12)
 - b. κοπιᾶω. To work to the point of being weary or tired.
 - c. LXX translation of Isaiah 40:31 *but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not **grow weary**, they will walk and not be faint.*

D. Married couples serving the Lord together.

1. Aquilla and Priscilla
2. Andronicus and Junias (16:7)
 - a. "Outstanding among the apostles"
 - b. Apostolos = messengers, as in John 13:16 "*I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a **messenger** greater than the one who sent him.*"
 - c. They were a **missionary couple!**

E. The importance of Deacons.

1. Those who serve. (Men, women, teens, children)
2. The office of Deacon.

F. **The Importance of People**

1. Paul knew each of these people by name.
2. He knew where they were! "*The knowledge of their whereabouts remains a tribute to his deep concern for people.*" (Mounce, NAC)
3. Very personal
 - a. "My dear friend, Epenetus" (16:5)
 - b. "Ampliatius, whom I love in the Lord" (16:8)
 - c. "Rufus mother, who has been like a mother to me too" (16:13)
 - d. **Paul did not know how to fulfill his calling aside from working with people.**

American culture over emphasizes individual isolation.

We live in a **personalized world.**

- settings on your cell phone
- I pods to I phones to I pads

– Every computer program has almost endless personal settings

We live in secluded bubbles.

Electronic bubbles

Suburban bubbles

We are always interacting with people, but it is rarely in person.

We have forgotten about the importance of PEOPLE

Paul never did.