

Romans 16:1-16, 21-24 Ministry is a Team Sport

Intro: I grew up playing 3 main team sports – Football, Basketball and Baseball.

A)Of the three – Basketball was probably my favorite even though baseball was my best sport – excelled in the most

B)But the thing I loved about Basketball – **I could play it by myself**

C)See I loved to practice – even more than the games. -Loved to work

1)Football was virtually impossible to practice alone

D)Baseball – **give me a wall and a bouncy rubber ball-** practice fielding ground balls – fly balls - all defense – hard to practice hitting alone

E)But in Basketball – I all I needed was a ball and a hoop and I could simulate in my mind a whole – game. –

1)1/2 court full court – take turns being both teams on offense – imagine someone guarded me – hrs doing that

That is why I loved basketball the best – I wasn't dependent on anyone else in order to enjoy the sport

A)But when it came to the actual games – Football/ baseball/ basketball are all team sports – takes a team to be successful

B)Warriors – Love their team concept

C)MINISTRY IS A TEAM SPORT!

Here is what is interesting about ministry in the church – too often the people that get all the attention- the ones on stage.

A)Meet people – YOUR CHURCH – I usually always correct them – not my church – Jesus' church – I play a small role – main teacher

B)But the Church is the body – made up of many members all fulfilling different roles and functions

1)And a great deal of those roles and functions are behind the scenes

C)In fact it is the people working behind the scenes that make so much of the ministry happen.

D)Effective ministry is happening – all over this campus all week long

1)Especially in our weekly gatherings – but a lot of it happens unseen from the human eye – **but NEVER FROM GOD'S EYE.**

Paul here in Chapter 16 is going to take the time to mention 35 different names of people.

A)These were all men and women serving in different capacities – most of which are behind the scenes

B)But that doesn't make the service any less important or valuable

C)Some people tend to glance over chapters like this but I personally find them fascinating

1)Because they give them a glimpse into the body of Christ and how the body of Christ is to function.

E)People are important to God

Paul is going to mention two groups of Characters

A)1st group is 27 people -26 of whom are living in Rome and are a part of the church that met in Rome.

B)Paul has never been to Rome – but he knows these people and has had some interaction with them over the years

1)He is sending his greetings to them

C)V.21-24 He mentions 8 other people – **these are people who are with Paul in Corinth. – Corinth is in Southern Greece**

D)Paul has been in Corinth for a year and a half - these are 8 people who serve with him there

1)They are sending their greetings as well

E)As we consider these names we will see some qualifying terms and character for ministry

1)Note: Several are women

There has been a lot of controversy in the Church through the decades about the role of women in the Church.

A)Some extremely liberal – **a woman can do anything including be a Pastor**

B) Then you have those who are more conservative – limit the role of a woman to being that of only ministering to Children and other women

C) As I have studied the Bible – I see that women can be extremely useful in the body of Christ

D) The only real exception that God sets for the woman –

1) **1 Timothy 2 is that a woman** – cannot be a Pastor or Elder – only exception

E) Role reserved for men – not because men are more spiritual or smarter or anything like that – more to do with God's design

1) Just like in Marriage – Man is to be the head.

But women have a Huge Role – Genesis – God calls Eve the Ezer Kenegdo

A) Ezer – meaning of strength and power –

B) Ezer appears twenty-one times in the Old Testament—twice in reference to the first woman, 1) 16 times in reference to God as the helper of Israel.

C) the Hebrew term *Ezer*, or “helper,” is employed to describe God, the consummate intervener—

D) the word *kenegdo* to mean something like “a helper of the same nature,” or a corresponding character.

1) the wife is a helper of strength and power comparable to her husband {**Distinct gifts and abilities – Wired**}

E) So in the first mention of the woman in the Bible – elevated position

Jesus elevated women in a culture viewed as property –

A) First person he appeared to after the Resurrection was a woman

B) Peter calls women – fellow heirs of the grace life

C) Acts 21:9 We read of Philip's daughters who prophesied

1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul acknowledged that women prayed and prophesied in the gatherings of the Corinthian church, **and he didn't rebuke them.**

D) 1 Corinthians 14:3 tells us that prophesy is **speaking “edification, exhortation, and comfort to men.”**

E) Paul commanded Titus (another pastor) to facilitate opportunities for the older women to teach younger women about biblical womanhood.

We will see here in Romans 16 - Paul was happy to be assisted by a woman named Phoebe -female deacon-

A) I say all of that to make this point 1 Timothy 2 is clear – women can't be the lead Pastor in a Church

B) But let's not hold them back from what they can do

C) Jesus is the head –

1) Men are the Muscle- **Women are the heart beat – sensitivity**

D) The Body functions the best – when every part is doing what it was designed to do

1) Everyone is using their gifts – for God's glory.

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

A) The first person he mentions is Phoebe – a servant of the church in Cenchrea

B) The word servant is the literally diakonos or deacon or in her case deaconess.

1) Many believe that she held an official role in the church in Cenchrea as a deacon –

2) helped serve in the practical matters of the church

C) Which is what a Deacon – does – the first deacons in the book of Acts chapter 6 – Table waiters – served food.

D) According to the writings of the church fathers, deaconesses visited the sick, helped young women grow in the Lord, and tended the poor.

E) How we need those who have a heart to be servants like Phebe—those who say,

“Our call is to tend those who are sick, poor, and young in the Lord.”

Phoebe was with Paul in Corinth and is the one who will carry this letter of Romans to Rome

A)What we know as the book of Romans – really a letter – she was commissioned to deliver it to the saints in Rome

B)Today – Letter – click send - Some still – prefer snail mail – Envelope and a stamp

1)Paul’s day you would hand deliver it yourself or send it by way of a friend.

C)Phoebe was the friend commissioned with this great task.

Notice Paul says in V.2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

A)The word Helper = guardian – this letter of Romans was entrusted to her –

B)As Phoebe has been entrusted with the book of Romans – You and I have been entrusted with the book the gospel

C)Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the gospel is like a treasure that has been placed into the earthen vessel of our lives

The gospel is a valuable treasure!

A)Psalm 45 tells us that the salvation of a soul is costly – context of the Psalm is that no manner of money can purchase it

B)The only thing that can save is the gospel – You and I are guardians of the gospel

1)Not guardians in a sense that we are to hide it and protect

C)But guardians in the sense that Phoebe was – we have been commissioned to deliver it

1)Phoebe did a great Job – she got Romans to the church in Rome and it has carried over to our day 2019 studying it in Vista Ca

D)Think of it in terms of being a guardian of a trust fund.

1)Your duty is to distribute it to the people it was intended for

E)In our case the gospel – given to bring life to a dying world

So first Paul mentions Phoebe

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

A)When Paul first came to Corinth, he was introduced to Aquila and his wife, Priscilla—tentmakers, like himself.

B)Paul’s support wasn’t enough to sustain him Physically so he needed a Job to make ends meet – tent maker

1)Meet this couple – who were also tentmakers – worked with them

C)Possible that , Paul led them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ,

1)They opened their home for Paul to live in as well.

Paul ministered in Corinth for a year and half and this couple assisted him in the ministry in Corinth.

A)It seems he was living with this couple the entire time

B)When Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him as his companions and co-workers.

1)As Paul made his way yet farther north, Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus,

C)They met a man there named Apollos – a great orator who was a follower of John the Baptist ministry . –

1)Apollos had a limited knowledge of Jesus and it says in Acts 18 that this couple taught him more fully the way of JESUS

D)So this is what we know of this couple – they were hard working – Hospitable and they knew the word

E)They risked their necks for my life – {Not sure what this is in reference to –

1)but being a friend of Paul was at time dangerous to be sure

2) Good to consider: What have you risked for the kingdom of God

➤ **Personal cost for you to follow Jesus?**

See here in Romans that Priscilla and Aquila ended up in Rome.

A) Some have even suggested Paul sent them ahead to set the stage and do some groundwork for his own journey to Rome.

B) It's interesting to me that in the six times this couple is mentioned, Priscilla's name is seen first four times.

1) Why is this significant?

C) Because in those days, the man's name was always mentioned first.

So it is agreed by many commentators that Priscilla seems to be the one who had the more dynamic and powerful ministry.

A) Yes, they traveled together—but it seems as though Aquila,

B) realizing his wife had special and beautiful gifts, facilitated them and was not threatened by them.- Possibility

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

C) In Rome there was a church meeting in their house.

D) Homes played a significant role in the early church

We read in the book of Acts chapter 2 they met daily from house to house

A) So meeting in homes was part of the model of the New Testament church – Part of the model – not THE MODEL

B) I point that out because today the House church model is growing more popular –

1) Those who want to say – Right way – House church is the only Biblical way to do church – NOT TRUE

C) The Church in Acts – met daily at the Southern steps of the Temple – **met by the 1,000's**

1) As well as from house to house

D) In Ephesus – the church met 6 days a week in the School of Tyrannus -for 4hrs a day

1) And there is no mention of the church meeting in homes in the city of Ephesus – though they probably did at some point

So meeting in Homes is to be a part of the life of a church but not to the exclusion of the all church corporate gathering

A) Learn in Rows connect in circles –

B) Home group – men's/ women- Skills – Discipleship – Important

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

A) First convert – in Achaia

6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us.

V.12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, (Per/sees) who labored much in the Lord.

A) I love this – he mentions 4 more ladies – all of which he says – labored much in the Lord

B) Labored here = labored to the point of exhaustion! Ministry is hard work

C) Labor and ministry in the NT is often linked with the idea farming – that is a great picture.

Farming is hard work – long hours

A) But Labor is similar to ministry in this way: The hard work that you put in today is going to bear fruit or results at a later time

B) In other words the reward is usually not immediate

C) That is why sometimes in ministry we can get discouraged because we don't see the immediate reward of our labor

1) Or the immediate return on our time or investment

D) We forget that ministry is like farming – Plow and plant now – see the fruit – latter on – much latter –

1) Might even be when we get to heaven – FAITHFUL

Tryphena and Tryphosa

A) Their names mean – Dainty and Delicate – these dainty and delicate gals are working hard – love that

B) Reminds me of a verse in Nehemiah – Building the wall – Nehemiah stations the people on various parts of the wall

1) One part of the wall was built by the perfumers and the Jewelers

C) **Perfumers and Jewelers** are not usually associated with masonry – but in this case they were. – Helping

D) It is not what they were trained to be doing but they gave themselves to the work

E) The Beauty of the body of Christ – everyone pitching in and helping out!

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

A) Bible students, this is an important verse because it is a key to understanding the apostolic ministry.

B) There are those who say there are only eleven apostles—twelve if Paul is included in the position vacated by Judas—and that there are no apostles in the church today.

C) On one hand, I agree with them. On the other hand, I disagree.

That is, if they're speaking of apostles that were appointed by Jesus Christ, I agree that there were only twelve,

A) Criteria they had to have seen Jesus visibly. They had to have a firsthand knowledge of His ministry;

B) and their ministries had to be confirmed with observable signs and wonders that validated their apostolic ministry.

1) They were given unique apostolic authority to pen the NT and chart the course of the church

C) But there are two other categories of apostles, each linked with the other two Persons of the Trinity.

1) The Father sent out **one Apostle: Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 3:1).

D) The Spirit sent out many apostles—Andronicus, Junia, Titus, Timothy, Barnabas, and a host of others called apostles in Scripture

Therefore, in my opinion, the apostolic ministry continues today in those who are sent out by the Spirit,

A) those who feel called in their hearts to go forth.

B) Missionaries could be more accurately called apostles.

C) The problem with the term “apostle” arises only from a misunderstanding of the word. SENT ONES

8 Greet Amplias, **my beloved** in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our **fellow worker** in Christ, and **Stachys**, (Sta/whos/ **my beloved**. **BELOVED** 10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

A) **Apelles APPROVED = tested and proven**

B) Apelles was tested – he went through something and came out the other side – proven

C) Proven – board that you are going to walk on to cross over something – 1) 1st person does it – it is tested and proven - the rest of us can cross over too

Tested and proven is a neat testimony to have – a person who has gone through some things that have broken others

A) They made it – so we can too!

B) Their lives are a testimony to the faithfulness of God.

C) Then you see God using them after their trial and it gives us all some insight of what God can do with a life – tested/proven like that.

11 Greet Herodion, my countryman. (Jewish) Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus (Narki/sos) who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Per/sis, (Per/sees) who labored much in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Rufus, it seems, is the same Rufus spoken of in Mark 15:21. Rufus' father was Simon of Cyrene—Cyrene—From Northern Africa.

A) We know he was a proselyte, one who had converted to Judaism

Simon of Cyrene, desiring as all Jews did, to celebrate at least one of the feasts in the Holy City,

A) So he saved all of his money and made all of the necessary plans and preparations.

B) At last the day arrived when he crossed the Mediterranean to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem!

1) But when he arrived, he realized it was an unusual festival. Controversy abounded.

C) He watched at the beginning of the week when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and the people cried, "Hosanna."

1) But at the end, the people cried, "Crucify." And Simon didn't know what to make of it.

Lined up along the street with hundreds of thousands of others, Simon watched this Man carrying a Cross to Calvary.

A) On the way, Jesus stumbled right in front of him.

A) Not wanting Jesus to die on the street, but wanting to see Him make it to Calvary where He could be tortured further and crucified,

B) One of the soldiers stopped and rested the point of his spear upon the shoulder of a man named Simon.

1) Simon the Cyrene was now compelled by Roman law to carry the Cross the rest of the way to Calvary.

C) Simon probably wondered, *Why me? Of all the hundreds of thousands of people here, why do I have to carry this criminal's cross up the hill?*

D) But he had no choice. So he put the Cross on his shoulder.

1) The procession continued on to Calvary and Jesus was crucified—with Simon probably watching and wondering. **What was this all about?**

What happened to Simon?

A) He became a believer, a follower of Christ!
How do I know?

B) The gospel writer Mark writing his gospel account about 37 yrs after the crucifixion

1) Writing from Rome – Wrote these words
Mark writes, "And they compelled one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross"
Mark 15:21)

C) Do you see the significance of that statement: Mark writing 37 yrs later from Rome

1) Identified Simon as the father of Rufus and Alexander—

D) The implication being that Rufus and Alexander were known by name in the Christian community in Rome.

E) **Forty or fifty years later**, in Romans 16:13, Paul once again mentions Rufus by name - **Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother**

The implication and significance of this is very meaningful to me.

A) and his whole family – His wife and his two sons – became followers of Christ!

B) They were known intimately by the believers in Rome

14 Greet Asyncritus, (Asuucritos) Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, **Nereus** and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

Philologus – Philo = Love – Logus the word – Lover of the word – all of us

A) Olympas = Heavenly – cool name

B) Nereus = Lump – Lumpy – fat baby

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you

A) Cultural – today hug – hand shake – fist bump

B) Italy – Holy Kiss –

A couple more names – The first group aside from Phoebe were all in Rome –

the 2nd group is in Corinth with Paul – team ministry
V.21-24

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater **So/sip/atros** Why couldn't my parents name me Jason, my countrymen, greet you.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

Tertius is the guy who penned the epistle. Love this – even the writing of a book in the Bible is not a one many thing

A) Paul failing eyesight – big print – **Paul dictated to Tertius – he wrote it down**

B) Phoebe delivered it

C) The rest of us are sharing it

23 **Gaius**, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Qu/ar/tus, a brother.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Learn from this – Ministry is a team sport – We all have a role – we all have a place – Jesus is blessed – we are all working together

A) Beauty of the body

B) Not working together – Schism – out of balance – missing synergy