

(1) I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

(3) Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house.

(5b) Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well-known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

(8) Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.

(12) Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also, his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the other brothers who are with them.

(15) Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches in Christ greet you.

Think on these things:

- 1) Phoebe is believed to be the deliverer of Paul's letter to Rome. We are told that she comes from the church in Cenchrea, a port city about 7 miles southeast of Corinth (Greece). What was her role in her church (v. 1, see 1 Timothy 3:8-13)? What did Paul ask the church in Rome to do for her (v. 2)? Can you explain what a "Patron" is, and what this tells us about Phoebe?

Phoebe was a servant of 'deaconess' (NIV, ESV note) of her church. According to Timothy, deacons were to be dignified, straight-talkers, not given to wine consumption, or greedy for dishonest wealth. They were to be knowledgeable of the scriptures, and tested to ensure they were blameless in the sight of others. Phoebe was her church's leader. Paul asked the Roman church to welcome her and assist her in any way she asked.

Patrons were wealthy people who funded others needing income for things they did that didn't produce a steady income. The most common action was to sponsor an artist (painter or sculptor). Paul says Phoebe was his Patron, so she must have funded his missionary journeys, as well as those of others (v. 2). Thus, Phoebe was also a person of substantial wealth.

- 2) Let's see what we can learn about Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca) from these passages:

Acts 18:1-4 **Aquila and Priscilla were Jews native to Pontus (Northcentral Turkey), and now lived in Corinth after some years in Italy. They were tentmakers like Paul.**

Acts 18:18-19, 24-26 **Leaving Corinth with Paul, they settled in Ephesus. After Paul left, there they encountered an eloquent debater for the Gospel named Apollos. The couple took him under their wing for a time and 'explained The Way of God more accurately.'**

- 3) The danger where Aquila and Priscilla may have risked their “necks” for Paul could possibly be from one of these two incidents: (skim) Acts 19:34-41 and 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. What were the incidents?

Acts is the account of the Ephesus riot. The silversmiths led it because Paul’s preaching was ruining their silver idol income, and they wanted rid of him. In Corinthians, Paul shares that he was so afflicted in the region of Asia (SW Turkey, including Ephesus) that he and his team despaired of life and believed they were under a death sentence...until God delivered them.

- 4) What were Aquila and Priscilla doing in their home at the time this letter was written (v. 5a)? Has this idea ever appealed to you? NOTE: Asia refers to a province in Southwestern Turkey at this time, not today’s “continent.”

Aquila and Priscilla provided a church from their home. == This is a chance to discuss class members using their homes for ministry in support of the church...subject to church approval (due to insurances, etc...). Youth work. Bible study. Women’s or Men’s meetings.

- 5) In verses 5-11, Paul identifies 3 persons as his relatives. Who are they, and what was special about two of them? NOTE: This may simply mean that they were dear to Paul, and not related.

Andronicus and Junia are ‘my kinsmen’, and they became followers of Christ before Paul did (v. 7). Herodian is also listed as Paul’s kinsman (v. 11).

- 6) Rufus (v. 13) may or may not be the same person found in Mark 15:21. If he is the same man, what is unique about him? Notice that Paul refers to Rufus’ mother as like his own, which would be a tremendous outcome for the events of Mark 15!

Mark shares about Simon of Cyrene, the man compelled by the Romans to carry Jesus’ cross to Golgotha when He was unable to do this. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. If the same man, Rufus could possibly have then been an eye witness to the crucifixion.

- 7) What was the common Christian greeting of the day (v. 16)? **A (holy) kiss (on the cheek?)**

- 8) Is there any lesson to be learned here by Paul citing the names of so many people? Explain.

Behind every well-known Christian luminary in the world (e.g., Billy Graham), there are untold numbers of people who work on their behalf in the background. The Christian life is life in a believer community, a “Body.” With God’s Spirit we never go it alone --- and He always surrounds us with other believers in support. In the faith, we don’t live to ourselves!

- 9) Using your Bible notes or class discussion, how many women are named here (presume names to be “male” unless noted otherwise or as a couple; also, names ending with an “---a” are typically female)? Is Christian ministry for men only?

At least 9: Phoebe (v. 1), Priscilla (Prisca, v. 3), Mary (v. 6), Junia (v. 7), Tryphaena and Tryphosa (v. 12), Rufus’ mother (v. 13), and Julia and Nereus’ sister (v. 15). Clearly, Christian ministry involves both men and women!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: