

Spiritual Friendships

Key Scriptures

Romans 16:1-16 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.

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. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

⁶ Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 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.

⁸ Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

¹⁰ Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

¹¹ Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, 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. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

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

Key Point: No matter the differences between them, they are an example of unity for us to follow.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Describe briefly your first best friend. What “old friends” do you keep in touch with? Why?

Start thinking: Questions to get your group thinking.

- Which description of ordinary church members in verses 1-15 particularly strikes you?
- What kinds of things does Paul commend in the persons mentioned in 1-16? Although Paul had never been to Rome, what does this greeting show us about his perception of the church?
- Why is it almost a universal thought that Phoebe was the person who carried Paul’s letter to Rome?
- Priscilla & Aquila were mentioned often in Scripture. What involvement did they have in the early church? (see Acts 18:2-3, 18, 24-26, 1 Cor 16:19)

Start sharing: Questions to create openness.

- Who are some people you know whom you consider real servants of Christ? What impresses you about them?
- Do you feel it is easy or difficult to develop deeper relationships in the church?
- In what ways can we overcome the challenge of people feeling they already have enough relationships, especially in a culture that may be perceived as colder and less welcoming? How can our church embody the command to greet one another with acceptance and love?

Start doing.

Who could you reach out to this week to spend time with, not just as a friend, but as a spiritual friend, being focused on the things of God and encouraging them?

Prayer Requests. It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

-
-
-