



MEET & GREET

“CHURCH FELLOWSHIP”

A STUDY OF ROMANS 16 (PART I)

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea. ²Welcome her in the Lord in a manner that is worthy of saints, and assist her in whatever way she may need your help, for she has certainly been a helper for many people, including me.

“I commend to you.” Paul understood the need for properly expressing Christian fellowship. Look at the following verses to come up with a good description of how Christian fellowship ought to be practiced.

- I thank my God every time I remember you. Every time I pray for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)
- Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one mind. (Philippians 2:2)
- And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? (1 Cor 5:2)
- James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. (Galatians 2:9)
- Live with all humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph 4:2-3)
- So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. (Philemon 17)

Paul writes about “greeting” many people here. Discuss what is meant by “greet” in this closing context. (Compare with Mt 10:9-14, Rom 16:23)

	Discuss the descriptions and titles given to Phoebe. Describe the appropriate response to dedicated women like Phoebe who serve God's people in various ways.
³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their necks for my life. I am not the only one who is thankful to them. All the churches of the Gentiles are as well.	<p>Rate how invested these two were for Paul's gospel cause. Discover one other important role these two carried out in Corinth. (1 Cor 16:19)</p> <p>Read Acts 18:18–26 and explain how these two did mission work in Ephesus.</p> <p>Explain: "Church fellowship has circular blessings."</p>
⁵ Greet also the church that meets at their house.	Explain why house churches were common in the ancient church. How might this be applied to ministry today?
Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.	Paul makes a note of the "first converts" in his mission work. Deduce why he might choose to highlight them.
⁶ Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.	Find evidence here that Paul was not in any way against women, even if he taught the headship of men.
⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and fellow prisoners, who are highly regarded by the apostles. They were in Christ before I was.	<p>What can we say for certain about these two?</p> <p>Explain the possible difference in meanings between translations and determine which fits best in context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles (CSB) ▪ They are outstanding among* the apostles (NIV) * NIV footnote "or esteemed by" ▪ who are of note among the apostles (KJV) ▪ They are highly respected among the apostles (NLT)

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.	Ampliatus has no record or anything to attach to his name. But he has the unqualified recommendation of Paul as a dear friend. Discuss: Do you have someone you would call a “friend in the Lord” who otherwise might not be found in your circle of friends?
⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.	No more details are given about these two men. Urbanus shared in gospel ministry.
¹⁰ Greet Apelles, who was tested and approved in Christ.	A possible variation of “Apollos” but there is not any confirmation that this meant the same man who was instructed in Ephesus and then went to Greece. Discuss: How are people “tested and approved” today?
Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.	What significance is there in Paul greeting an entire household?
¹¹ Greet Herodion, my relative.	Compare with “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives.” (16:7) Also “Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives” (16:21) send greetings from Corinth with Paul. Discuss the implications if Paul was highlighting each fellow Jew vs highlighting each family relative.
Greet those from the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.	What seems to be implied about this household?
¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who worked hard in the Lord.	Could possibly be sisters that they are mentioned together. Discuss: How would you define working hard in the Lord today? When and how ought we to give shout outs to those who work hard in the Lord?

Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard for the Lord.	This is another woman highlighted in the list. Paul personally knows some of these people well and calls them “dearly loved.” Discuss: How would you define working very hard in the Lord today?
¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who was a mother to me too.	Discern what makes these two people outstanding in Paul’s list.
¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.	Possibly five prominent brothers who welcomed Christian brothers to meet at their home. The WELS is a smaller church body of under 400,000. It is a common joke that as soon as people greet within the WELS they make a “WELS Connection” of known pastors or relatives. Determine the pros and cons of this type of connection seeking.
¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.	Two more women are included here. By “The Lord’s people who are with them.” We might understand this as another house church.
¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.	<p>This type of kiss is mentioned in four other places in the Epistles, three times by Paul and once by Peter. It had no romantic implications. Describe what might be the equivalent in your culture. Evaluate if we practice this ritual as much as we ought.</p> <p>Up to this point Paul has highlighted the positive side of church fellowship practices. Review all the positives that come from practicing fellowship with those who are united with us in teaching and practice.</p>



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A STUDY OF ROMANS 16 (PART 2)

¹⁷But I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the teaching that you learned, and keep away from them.

Instead of sharing greetings and supporting someone Paul identifies an entirely different type of people. He urges his readers to watch out for and keep away from them. Explain how we should go about identifying these types of people and how we “watch out, keep away from” them.

Where should we draw the line when it comes to divisions and offenses?

Identify one essential thing about Christian ministry if we are going to follow Paul’s instructions here.

Explain how someone’s church affiliation or lack of it serves as a witness to others.

¹⁸For such people are not serving Christ our Lord but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery, they seduce the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Paul lists the sad goal of those who deviate from the clear teachings of Scripture. This isn't always apparent at first.

Identify one of the methods of those who cause divisions. Explain why it is so dangerous for us to latch onto desiring worldly gifts for pastors and teachers in the church instead of what really matters.

Identify the primary targets of those who cause divisions by false teachings and practices.

¹⁹Your obedience has become known to everyone, so I am very joyful about you. But I want you to continue to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.
²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

What happens when fellowship practices are followed, and Christians remain faithfully united in God's Word?

How can we be "wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil"?

Paul identifies the real enemy and the real victor. Explain why this closing comfort is needed when contending for the gospel and striving to do faithful ministry.

<p>²¹Timothy, my coworker, greets you, along with Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives.</p> <p>²²I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.</p>	<p>Paul is not alone as he writes his letter from Corinth. He and his companions in Corinth are an example of the blessings of faithful fellowship practices.</p>
<p>²³Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you.</p>	<p>Gaius may be the same man who opened his home to Paul after he was driven out of the synagogue in Corinth.</p>
<p>Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus, the brother.</p>	<p>Many Christians were indeed poor, but not all. It included people in both low and high position in the ancient world.</p>
<p>²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you—</p>	<p>In what ways might we be tempted to rely on our own strength for maintaining a unified fellowship?</p>
<p>according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was veiled in silence for long ages past, ²⁶but now has been revealed through the prophetic Scriptures and made</p>	<p>According to my gospel ...” God works through his gospel to strengthen his Church. Explain how this truth adds to the importance of church fellowship practices.</p>

known to all the Gentiles, in keeping with the command of the eternal God, resulting in the obedience of faith—

²⁷to God, who alone is wise, be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen. ^(EHV)

“God who alone is wise.” One of the pitfalls when practicing church fellowship is giving the impression we are wiser than others or that our goal is to boast in ourselves. Create a list of ways we can glorify God alone when practicing sound church fellowship principles.

Share ways that Christian fellowship principles are often misrepresented or misunderstood.



Review the blessings of Christian fellowship and why it is so important to have sound fellowship principles.

Share what you appreciate most about Christian fellowship in your own experiences.