

Romans 16

1 A deaconess! Was the Roman church having troubles accepting women who had authority? It could be argued that she was literally one who waits on tables (a waitress) but it really doesn't seem to fit. She must have been going there and considering Paul's teaching, she may have been a teacher of the women, and an organizer of practical matters.

2 Her qualification to receive help is not the title but the fact that she has greatly helped many, including the Apostle Paul. A great help! Strong's Greek Number 4368 deaconess:

1) a woman set over others

2) a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources

Just exactly what her role was is not clear, but she is a deaconess, and greatly helped others, and the Roman church was expected to help her in any matters. She is listed before Priscilla and Aquilla!

3 Another team for Christ and his Kingdom. Interesting that Prisca is mentioned first. In Acts, Barnabas and Paul are mentioned first in that order. Later the order is reversed as Paul matured in his speaking ability and anointing. Did he consider her the spiritual leader of the team? I wouldn't build a doctrine around it but it didn't happen by accident. A fellow worker is *sunergos* - to labor with - alongside - I don't want to make more of the word than is here, but I personally feel Paul saw this ministry team as equals in their service to the Lord Jesus, not a team that he was overseeing. In 1Co 3:9 obviously God is superior to us the fellow workers, but it is his Spirit that works through us. That leaves no room to lord authority over others. Mt 23:8-10

4 When it comes to possibly laying down your life for each other, the commitment to love and honor has to grow deeper. This team had used their ministry to strengthen churches all over Asia. From Acts we can assume they were a teaching team.

5 Apparently this powerful team had a church that met to worship in their home. I wonder what the attendance was. Knowing Jewish homes it couldn't have topped 50. We are so into the mega-church concept but lives that really change are what changes the world. The one on one is emphasized here with Paul saying his first convert is his good friend.

6 Hard work is noted right alongside those who risked their lives teaching and preaching. Every member of the body is equally valuable to the whole.

7 This may be another ministry couple, but Junias is known to be a male or female name like the name Chris today. Some use this to say that a woman was considered an apostle. This is very weak argument. Not only can the name be male, but the language can also mean (as in English also) that the apostles all knew them. I'm not trying to argue against it, but just to bring out that it is a weak point. If you desire to teach women in authority positions over men, the above Prisca and Aquila argument is stronger.

8-10 tested and approved - we can say that about some. Household = wonderful to see whole homes in the Kingdom.

11 All the cases of relative may simply mean of the same tribe.

12 Outstanding women laborers for the Kingdom! Go women!

13-15 Paul had a concern and love for individuals. Are you like me and have a tough time remembering names? Maybe we need to pray for those we meet, more frequently, and by that recall their names more readily. Consider this list of names and Paul's love and appreciation for them.

16 The kiss on the cheek was a common greeting but family members would give a peck on the lips. It may be possible that the holy kiss meant a familial kiss, denoting a close relationship and willingness to recognize relationship.

17 Divisiveness is a thing that God hates. It has been in the church since it began. People like to draw others to themselves, their opinions, to be on their side. Pr 6:12-19 Paul reiterates this in many of his letters. The church should draw us together as a body, not divide us into factions and subgroups. By 'obstacles' I think he may have meant law that the Judaizers were trying to add works to Christian life.

18 Divisive people are serving their own appetites. The ones that are deceived are the young ones in Christ, the naive, and it is done through smooth talking, flattery. How do you deal with a true complaint? Mt 18. Take it to the one you have the complaint with, than bring in a witness, then the body.

19 Paul rejoiced in their testimony, obedience to God. He is saying to focus on the good and not worry about the evil. And the next verse tells us why!

20 God will deal with evil. Satan will be crushed under our feet. A prophetic word from Gen 3 often applied to Christ alone but we are the body. May his grace be with us as we live out this life on our way to eternity.

21-24 The church must have met in his house. A public official was a convert. (some manuscripts have a verse 24 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. amen.)

25-27 The meaning of the prophecies was coming to life. Jesus got them started by expounding on the road to Emmaus how all the Scriptures were about Him. The goal is for all mankind to believe and obey Jesus. That is Life. That is our best possible future. What a great benediction! God alone is truly wise. Through Jesus, all glory goes to Him for eternity.