

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – September 17, 2023

Theme: The power of God at work in us **Topic:** Greetings and Encouragement.

Main Texts: Romans 16:1-25

Key verse: Hebrews 10:24-25 *'And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching'* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Apostle Paul concludes the book of Romans by sending greetings to his audience. As he stated in Romans 15: 22, he had not had the opportunity to visit Rome, yet in this closing chapter of this letter to Rome, he mentions five groups of people and 26 persons (both Gentiles and Jews) by their names. Not only did he name them, but he is able to say something specific about almost every person greeted. It was not just a list of people. Also, some, like Priscilla and Aquilla, were people he had met in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3). For several others, there is no clear evidence of when and where he met them. Of those mentioned, some were well known, like Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7), while others were not and were never mentioned again elsewhere in the New Testament. Yet, he would mention them in his letter. Furthermore, although these greetings appear to be a simple list of names, they carry several layers of significance; a potential area of growth for the Body of Christ today.

1. **Reflect on Romans 16:1-25. (a) Apostle Paul mentions several groups of persons and 26 different individuals in this passage. Of what significance is this to you? (b) Putting yourself in the shoes of the Romans believers, what impact do you think these greetings did for those mentioned and the rest of the brethren when they read the letter? (c) What is the lesson in this for us and how can we apply this lesson in our situation?**

Not only did Apostle Paul mention those names, he also went a step further to mention the role each played in his personal life and ministry and in the church. Some, like Phoebe, were servants, and others like Priscila and Aquila, risked their lives for Paul. Their lives' sacrifice was a blessing to all the Gentile churches (Romans 16:4)! Some others were helpers, and others opened their homes for assembling and ministry. In like manner Paul acknowledges the contributions and efforts of his teammates in the work of the kingdom. Tertius was 'only' the secretary, while Gaius played host to both Paul and the whole church in that city!

2. **Read 1 Corinthians 16: 10, 15-19; Ephesians 6:21. Paul made a habit of acknowledging the contributions of others. (a) What do you notice about the way he acknowledged the contributions of others? And how do you think this affected those acknowledged? (b) What can we learn from Paul's example of acknowledging others? (c) Let participants reflect on how they see their roles in the body of Christ. Whose contribution or role in Romans 16:1-24 do you admire the most, and why? What can you do to be more like that individual or group?**

Greeting others by name and acknowledging their contribution in the common cause has the potential to strengthen the sense of community and belonging among the believers (Koinonia). The act of mentioning someone's name in a positive context can create a sense of validation, worth, and connection. Lastly, Paul touches on 'troublemakers' and exhorts and urges the church to *'note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned...'* (Romans 16:17). This is so significant because it shows that there will always be some people who, though are among us, are not for us or with us. These, consciously or unconsciously, cause divisions in the Body of Christ. And the solution is simple. Avoid them. In addition, Paul gives a most intriguing warning: *'... I would have you well versed and wise as to what is good and innocent and guileless as to what is evil'* (Romans 16:19b).

3. **(a) Not everyone is a 'troublemaker' who should be avoided. According to Romans 16:17-18, what is the characteristic of these troublemakers whom we are admonished to avoid? (b) Considering that God's desire is for all to be saved, why are we urged to 'avoid' these troublemakers? And how would you in practice avoid these 'troublemakers' especially if they are members of VFC or are your friends? (c) Hebrews 10:24-25 urges us to encourage one another as we see the Day approaching. Let participants share practical ways that they will apply this lesson in the next seven days. See also Romans 1:9-12 and Romans 16:19-20.**

Prayer: *Our dear heavenly Father, we thank You for Apostle Paul's example to the Body of Christ. We pray that each of us would follow his example of sincere love and connection with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.*