

Romans 16:1-2

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchree, ² 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.

Background

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul mentions over thirty people who served as Gospel ministry partners. Most of these figures are mentioned only once or twice in Scripture with limited information about their lives but were influential in supporting Paul's missionary journeys. In today's message, Pastor David will introduce us to Phoebe, a remarkable ministry partner of Paul, whose impact on the spreading of the Gospel extends far beyond the two verses in which she is mentioned. A believer in Jesus, wealthy businesswoman, benefactor, leader, and deacon, Phoebe earned the trust of Paul to carry and likely read and interpret his most detailed theological letter to the believers at the church in Rome.

Service Notes

What is your biggest takeaway from today's message?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The “Getting Started” section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the “Talk it Over” section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Again, our hope is to have meaningful and encouraging conversations around the passage used in the sermon, not simply answer all the questions. Give each member of your group opportunity to respond. Take your time. Finally, the “Live it Out” section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- ▼ What is one thought from the message that made you hopeful? What prompted questions? How can we pray for you this week?

Talk it Over

- ▼ **Read Romans 16:1 again.** Why is Paul’s description of Phoebe as “our sister” important for the mission to the believers at Rome? What does Phoebe being called a “servant” or “deacon” at the church in Cenchreae teach us about her character and life? Why do you believe Paul could have trusted her with the important task of taking his letter to Rome?
- ▼ Phoebe was a “patron” or “benefactor” for Paul and others. This means she was likely a wealthy businesswoman of high social status who was able to financially support great missionary efforts. Regardless of how much we may have, what does this kind of ministry support look like in a local church? How are you using your social status or your possessions to invest in kingdom-building work right now?
- ▼ **Read Acts 5:1-11.** What is the difference between the way Phoebe and the couple in this passage approached using their resources? What does this passage teach us about our motivations in giving? What can we learn both positively and negatively from this story?
- ▼ In our churches today, what are some of the ways people can feel as though they are “limited” (both in function or position) to serve Jesus or lead in the life of the church? What are some ways the local church can better equip and empower believers from all walks of life to use all they have to spread the Gospel?

Live it Out

- ▼ What is one possible way you can maximize your possessions or position to support to invest more deeply into the work God is doing in the lives of people around you?