

Romans 16:1-16  
The Importance of Commendations and Greetings

**Introduction:**

**1) We should express APPROVAL those who serve Christ well—16:1-2**

- a) <sup>1</sup> *I commend* [sunī,sthmi] *to you*
  - i) *our sister Phoebe,*
  - ii) *a servant* [deaconess] *of the church at Cenchreae,*
    - (1) Cenchreae was the eastern port for Corinth, @ 7-8 miles away.
    - (2) Deacons can be either long-term or temporary.
- b) <sup>2</sup> *that you may ....*
  - i) *What should they do?*
    - (1) Embrace: welcome [prosde,comai] *her*
      - (a) How? # 1: *in the Lord*
      - (b) How? # 2: *in a way worthy of the saints,*
    - (2) Supply: *and help* [pari,sthmi] *her*
      - (a) To what extent? *in whatever she may need from you,*
  - ii) *Why should they do this?*
    - (1) *for she has been a patron/benefactress* [prosta,tij] *of many and of myself as well.*
    - (2) Paul apparently refused financial assistance from the church itself (by making tents) but not from this individual woman.
- c) She is normally understood to be the one who carried this letter from Paul to the congregation in Rome.

**2) We should express RESPECT for other believers by name—16:3-16**

- Paul refers to @ 2 dozen named people (17 men, 8 women), 2 unnamed women, and 2 households, and 3-5 house churches.
- a) A well-known husband-and-wife team—16:3-5a
    - i) <sup>3</sup> *Greet* [avspa,zomai] *Prisca and Aquila,*
      - (1) Hard working: *my fellow workers* [sunergo,j] *in Christ Jesus,*
        - (a) Paul has known them at least 5 years at the time he writes this
      - (2) Sacrificial: <sup>4</sup> *who risked their necks for my life,*
      - (3) Praiseworthy: *to whom* (both Prisca and Aquila) *not only I give thanks* [euvcarī ste,w] *but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.*
    - ii) <sup>5</sup> *Greet also the church in their house.*
  - b) Specific individuals, families, and groups—16:5b-15
    - i) Individual male: *Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia* (about 2 years prior).
    - ii) Individual female: <sup>6</sup> *Greet Mary, who has worked hard* [kopia,w] *for you.*
    - iii) Another husband-and-wife team: <sup>7</sup> *Greet Andronicus and Junia,*
      - (1) Jewish Christians: *my kinsmen*
      - (2) Experienced in suffering: *and my fellow prisoners.*

- (3) Well respected: *They are well known to the apostles,*
- (4) Long-time Christians: *and they were in Christ before me.* (at least 20 years)
- iv) Four males:
  - (1) <sup>8</sup> *Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.*
  - (2) <sup>9</sup> *Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.*
  - (3) <sup>10</sup> *Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ.*
- v) A family: *Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.*
  - (1) This may be a grandson of Herod the Great, though not definite. Aristobulus died in 48-49 AD, about 7 years before this letter.
- vi) Individual male: <sup>11</sup> *Greet my kinsman Herodion.*
  - (1) This may be a relative of the Herod clan.
- vii) A family: *Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.*
- viii) A possible pair of sisters: <sup>12</sup> *Greet those workers [kopia,w] in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa.*
- ix) Individual female: *Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard [kopia,w] in the Lord.*
- x) Individual male: <sup>13</sup> *Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord;* (cf. Mark 15:21)
  - (1) Possibly the son of Simon of Cyrene (North Africa).
  - (2) Individual unnamed female: *also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.*
- xi) A group of males: <sup>14</sup> *Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.*
- xii) A mixed group: <sup>15</sup> *Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his (unnamed) sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.*
- c) A general greeting—16:16
  - i) Express a culturally appropriate symbol of fellowship and unity: <sup>16</sup> *Greet one another with a holy kiss.*
    - (1) This was the near-Eastern mode of greeting. Men kissed men and women kissed women.
  - ii) *All the churches of Christ greet you.*

### 3) Things to remember:

- a) We cannot afford to ignore the unity and diversity of believers noted in this section
  - i) Male/female, well-known/obscure, free/slave, Jew/Gentile, married/single, etc.
- b) We cannot afford to ignore to what distinguishes some believers from others.
  - i) Christians who **serve sacrificially** should be noted, even when the exact circumstances are not known.
  - ii) Christians who **work hard** should be noted, even when their exact work is not known.
  - iii) Christians who are **especially loved** should be noted, even when the exact reason is not known.

- c) We cannot afford to ignore the reality that serving the Lord can be exhausting. (3 uses of kopia,w)
  - i) It is not wrong to be weary **in** ministry, but we go astray when we become weary **of** ministry.

Romans 16:17-27  
Final Warnings and Encouragement

**Introduction:**

**1) We need to learn to balance warnings and encouragement—16:17-20**

- a) How does Paul deal with this?—16:17 <sup>17</sup> *I appeal* [parakale,w] *to you, brothers,*
- b) What are we told to do with spiritually dangerous people?—16:17
  - i) Persistent vigilance concerning a serious threat: *to watch out* [skope,w] *for those who cause divisions* [dicostasi,a] *and create obstacles* [ska,ndalon] *contrary to* [para,] *the doctrine* [didach,] *that you have been taught* [manqa,nw];
    - (1) Watch out: A mental process of paying close attention in order to be prepared to respond appropriately. (Louw & Nida)
    - (2) Obstacles: Those ideas, teachings, or practices that hinder spiritual progress and potentially lead to destruction.
    - (3) This appeal is to the entire church body, while Acts 20:25-31 reminds the pastors of their similar duty.
  - ii) Purposeful avoidance concerning a serious threat: *avoid* [evkkli,nw] *them.*
    - (1) Purposely avoid association with, to no longer trust.
    - (2) Stern words of warning are not incompatible with a heart of love and compassion. (T. Schreiner)
  - iii) The child of God must beware of all those who by deceptive eloquence would lead them into error. (R. Mounce)
- c) Why are we to do these things?—16:18
  - i) They are **self-serving**:
    - (1) State negatively: <sup>18</sup> *For* [ga,r] *such persons do not serve* [douleu,w] *our Lord Christ,*
      - (a) Higher desires
    - (2) State positively: *but their own appetites* [koili,a],
      - (a) Lower desires
  - ii) They are **deceptive**: *and by smooth talk* [crhstologi,a] *and flattery* [euvlogi,a] *they deceive* [evxapata,w] *the hearts of the naïve/unsuspecting* [a;kakoj].
    - (1) Just as Peter states in a few years (2 Pet. 2:3).
- d) We can be encouraged in the face of difficult tasks—16:19-20
  - i) The reminder of God's past grace: <sup>19</sup> *For* [ga,r] *your obedience* [u`pakoh,] *is known* [avfikne,omai] *to all* (Rom. 6:17), *so that I rejoice over you,*
    - (1) Cautious warning: *but I want you ...*
      - (a) *to be wise* [sofo,j] *as to what is good* [avgaqo,j]
        - (i) Skillful in the good thing.
      - (b) *and innocent* [avke,raioj] *as to what is evil* [kako,j].
        - (i) To be untainted by evil. Used of impure metal that has not been weakened.

- (c) This is similar to Jesus' statement in Mat. 10:16.
- ii) The promised defeat of the adversary: <sup>20</sup> *The God of peace* (in contrast to the divisive false teachers) *will soon/quickly crush Satan under your feet.*
  - (1) Even though many would call for alleged peace at any cost, God is the only one who established genuine peace.
  - (2) This will be a fulfillment of Gen. 3:15.
- iii) The necessary means to the end: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

## 2) Additional greetings from a variety of believers—16:21-23

- a) A group of four:
  - i) A half-Jew: <sup>21</sup> *Timothy* (from Lystra), *my fellow worker, greets you;*
  - ii) Three Jews: *so do Lucius and Jason* (from Thessalonica) *and Sosipater* (from Berea), *my kinsmen.*
- b) The secretary: <sup>22</sup> *I Tertius* (“third”), *who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.*
- c) A group of three: <sup>23</sup> *Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer/steward* (possibly Acts 19:21-22; 2 Tim. 4:20), *and our brother Quartus, greet you.*

## 3) We need to embrace the final doxology—16:25-27

- a) <sup>25</sup> *Now to him who is able to strengthen/cause to be firm and unchanging you*
  - How are believers strengthened? Through the Word of God
  - i) Strengthening: *according to* [kata,] ...
    - (1) *my gospel* [euvagge,lion]
    - (2) *and the preaching* [kh,rugma] *of Jesus Christ,*
  - ii) Preaching: *according to* [kata,] ...
    - (1) *the revelation* [avpoka,luyij] *of the mystery* [musth,rion]
      - (a) *that was kept secret* [pf. pass. siga,w] *for long ages*
      - (b) <sup>26</sup> *but has now been disclosed* [aor. pass. fanero,w]
      - (c) *and through the prophetic* [profhtiko,j] *writings* (Old Testament) *has been made known* [aor. pass. gnwri,zw] *to all nations,*
  - iii) Making known: *according to* [kata,] ...
    - (1) *the command* [evpitagh,] *of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience* [u`pakoh,] *of faith—*
- b) <sup>27</sup> *to the only wise God be glory forevermore/unto the ages through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

## 4) Things to remember:

- a) May God grant us the grace to maintain the appropriate Godward balance of warning and encouragement.
- b) May God grant us a hunger for and submission to His Word so that He will be glorified through our obedience.

