



## **PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS – Encourage, Pray, and Praise**

### **CG Study Guide: Romans 15:23-16:16 – Week of January 8, 2023**

#### **1. Be Encouraged by other Christians**

Paul recognized the Lord's calling on him to preach the gospel in areas that had not been ministered to. This acknowledgement of the calling came at the cost of his desire to fellowship with the church in Rome. One of the lessons for us to remember is that often we are called to discern between what is good, and what is better. While it would be good for Paul to fellowship with the believers in Rome, the better things for him to do was to pursue the work that the Lord had given him. As Christians, we must examine regularly our priorities, and soberly determine if we are pursuing a good thing over something that is better. We must fully submit ourselves to the calling that God has placed on our lives, and cannot allow our loves to become disordered. In this passage, Paul shows his heart's desire is to be encouraged by believers, even during his rest. In verse 24, Paul lays out his plans for when he completes his work. He desires to rest and fellowship with the believers in Rome. For us as Christians, we must remember that the Sabbath is not only a rest from our labors, but it is designed to be dedicated to the Lord. In turn, part of the way we dedicate our rest to the Lord is to fellowship and be encouraged by the body of Christ.

#### **2. Pray for Other Christians**

Paul strongly encourages the Church of Rome to strive with him in prayer. As Christians, we are prone to forget the importance of prayer. We undervalue it, often because we misunderstand the severity of the spiritual warfare raging around us. Prayer turns our heart to God, who is the only source of authority and hope. When we seek Him in prayer, we appeal rightfully to the one who is working all things together. When we pray to God, it doesn't mean that events will turn out as we asked. God will work everything according to His will, not ours. We know that even though things will work out differently, with God they are working out for good.

#### **3. Praise God for other Christians**

In chapter 16, Paul takes the time to give honor and praise to those Christians who have helped him in the ministry of the Gospel. Likewise, we should honor those who are worthy of honor, and praise God for them.

#### **DISCUSSION GOALS**

##### **Head**

Paul is reminding us the importance of encouraging, and being encouraged, by God's people. That God is glorified when we love one another, and this should be reflected in our desires.

##### **Heart**

We should imitate Paul in his passion for the work of God, and love for God's people. We should find the Church as a source of encouragement, rest, and refreshment.

##### **Hands**

Out of our love for God, we should love one another. This results in prayer for each other, and for fellowship with the body.

## Read Romans 15:23-16:16

1. **Read Verse 22** What has hindered Paul? What lessons can we glean from how Paul acted in this season of ministry? As Christians, how do we determine/implement choosing something better over something that is good?
2. How do we view rest? What ways do we allow idolatry into our Sabbath? What role does fellowship and rest have with one another? What changes might be required in your life based upon the relationship between rest and fellowship?
3. **Read Verse 26-27** What does Paul mean that the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia “owe it” to the Church of Jerusalem? How do we see this in our own lives? How should we respond to those to whom we “owe it?”
4. Thinking of Paul, his plan for the spread of the Gospel, and ultimately how it transpired.... How has the Lord taught you to trust Him when circumstances have not met expectations? How has this process grown your faith in the sovereignty and goodness of God?
5. What habits or strategies do you use to effectively keep your commitments to prayer? As you pray faithfully, how has the Lord used these commitments to grow you in sanctification? How has it impact your life and relationships?
6. Paul puts an emphasis on both greeting and honoring Christians who have ministered in his life. Why is it important to honor those who deserve such honor? How do we practically do this in our regular lives?
7. What is the purpose of Paul instructing the church in Rome to greet one another with a holy kiss? How do we follow this instruction in our own setting?
8. What is the main theme of this passage? How are all these principals grounded in the Gospel?