

WHY
[H]O[R]H?



The Beauty of the Church

“People don’t understand, I try to explain it to them.
Redeemer isn’t just a place I attend, It’s my family.”

-John Decharo

Acts 20:28

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Romans 16:1-18

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 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. 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. 5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia...

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. 11 Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. 12 Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord...

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. 17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

I. Ordinary people used by God

Romans 16:13

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

Mark 15:21

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

“Because Paul knew Rufus’s mother (16:13), it is plausible that this is the Rufus known soon afterward to Mark’s possibly Roman audience, the son of Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21).”

-Craig Keener

2. Transformed People

I Corinthians 1:26-29

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.

3. Mission-Minded People

Acts 3:36-37

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”),
37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

4. Family People

“...Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners.”

Acts 20:36-38

When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

I John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

I John 3:16

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

I John 4:20

If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

5. Mature People

Romans 16:3-4

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I
give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks
as well.

Acts 12:5

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

Hebrews 13:2-3

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. 3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

6. Diverse People

Galatians 3:26-29

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

“As I read accounts of the New Testament church, no characteristic stands out more sharply than [diversity]. Beginning with Pentecost, the Christian church dismantled the barriers of gender, race, and social class that had marked Jewish congregations. Paul, who as a rabbi had given thanks daily that he was not born a woman, slave, or Gentile, marveled over the radical change: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

One modern Indian pastor told me, "Most of what happens in Christian churches, including even miracles, can be duplicated in Hindu and Muslim congregations..."”

“...But in my area only Christians strive, however ineptly, to mix men and women of different castes, races, and social groups. That's the real miracle.”

Diversity complicates rather than simplifies life. Perhaps for this reason we tend to surround ourselves with people of similar age, economic class, and opinion. Church offers a place where infants and grandparents, unemployed and executives, immigrants and blue bloods can come together. Just yesterday I sat sandwiched between an elderly man hooked up to a puffing oxygen tank and a breastfeeding baby who grunted loudly and contentedly throughout the sermon. Where else can we find that mixture...?”

“...When I walk into a new church, the more its members resemble each other—and resemble me—the more uncomfortable I feel.”

-Phillip Yancey

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

WHY
HURRY?

