

Romans 16

Study 13

Team Christianity

INTRODUCTION

Real Christianity is a team sport. "Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, *to build him up,*" says Paul (15:2). And more than that, we all have a part to play in God's work, the work of the gospel. Paul is in the front lines, but there's plenty of support - a whole bunch of different people, men, women, young people, old people, who are galvanised together for a common task.

"THE TEAM"

Read Romans 16.

1. How many people does Paul mention by name in this chapter?
2. Do a little detective work. What can you work out about the TYPES of people they are? (As a first step, look carefully at their names. Can you pick males from females, Jews from Greeks etc?)

It's encouraging to think that there are so many people from all different backgrounds and social classes who have been brought together in the task of telling people about Jesus! Are any of them just like YOU?

3. We saw an important aspect of teamwork at the end of chapter 15. What was it?

Since last week, have you been praying for the work of the gospel?

4. Can you see some other examples of teamwork scattered through chapter 16? Write down how the following people helped out...

- Priscilla and Aquilla (v3-5)
- Mary (v6)
- Andronicus and Junias (v7)
- Urbanus (v9)
- Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Persis (v12)
- Rufus's Mum (v13)
- Timothy (v21)
- Tertius (v22)
- Gaius (v23)

5. Are there ways YOU can be more involved in the team-work within our church? Think and pray about the possibilities!

“THE OPPOSITION”

Paul has often spoken about the need for unity in the team - especially in chapters 14 and 15. His concern for unity has raised some important questions; for example, *WHO* are we actually meant to be united with? Does Paul mean we simply turn a blind eye to different ideas and teachings? Is the Jehovah's Witness at the door simply a Christian brother or sister with a few wrong ideas? Paul has some strong words to say in verses 17 to 19 about the need to be aware of our opposition.

Read 16:17-19 again.

6. Who should we watch out for?

How will we recognise these people?

What do you think are the ESSENTIALS of "the teaching we have learned"?

Who are these people, and how do they operate? Are they still around?

What two things are necessary to stand against these people? (v19)

Is it "judgemental" or "divisive" to watch out for people like these?

7. Read Paul's final words in verses 25 to 27. The "mystery" hidden for so long is the fact that by the gospel, Jews and Gentiles alike would be brought into the family of God through Christ.

Who is the gospel intended for?

What response does Paul look for to the gospel? (end of v26)

8. Look back to what Paul says about the gospel back in chapter 1 verses 16-17. Think about these questions...

- In what ways has studying Romans deepened or clarified your understanding of this "gospel"?
- Have any of your attitudes been challenged, changed or shaped by what we have learned?
- How committed are you to the things that Paul considered MOST IMPORTANT?
- How can we make sure our CHURCH LIFE reflects the sort of GOSPEL TEAMWORK Paul is talking about?