

Conclusion

Paul worked hard to develop leadership in local churches, and in the Lord's worldwide mission. Although he was the 'apostle to the gentiles', he didn't hold this work to himself, but drew many others into the same work. It is a work that must continue to be shared until the Lord returns – a work in which we all share.

1. What gifts and abilities do you have that can be used in the ministry of the gospel?

2. How are you using them at present? How could you be using them in the future?

3. Have you ever considered the possibility of using your gifts and abilities to serve the Lord in another country or culture? Why/why not?

Finish the meeting by praying about the things you have learned, and asking the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest field.

go

ROMANS 15 & 16

Introductory Brainstorm

Do you have a special concern for a particular missionary or mission organisation? Why? What has caused you to identify with that person/organisation in that way?

Read Romans 15:23-33

Paul's life and ministry were dominated by Jesus' command to him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:20-22; 26:15-18). He was responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3; 16:6-10) but he also planned his work carefully – most notably planting churches in the major cities of ancient Greece and Turkey. These churches then become centres for mission to their surrounding region. We see him at work planning for his mission again in Romans 15.

1. What plans do you see Paul making in Romans 15:23-33?

2. Why was he planning to visit these places?

Spain:

Rome:

Jerusalem:

3. "Mission Agencies should only be concerned with evangelism, they shouldn't be involved in aid and development." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What do Paul's plans tell us about his understanding of his mission?

4. How did Paul ask the Roman Christians to support his ministry?

5. How do you support your partners in mission (missionaries)? In your small group, how can you more effectively support one (or more) of your partners in mission?

Read Romans 16:1-16

In Chapter 16 Paul sends greetings to people he knows among the Roman Christians, 28 people in all. Many of them are named as 'fellow workers'. This was a title Paul used to refer to his circle of assistants in ministry, those who worked with him in the proclamation of the gospel, either locally (within a local church), or globally (as part of his mission team). These 'fellow workers' in Rome probably met Paul in his travels in Asia and Greece, and had then moved to Rome, and were using their gifts to build the church there.

What do verses 1-4 tell you about Phoebe and Priscilla and Aquila and how they have used their gifts and abilities in the work of the gospel?

(The word 'help' in v2 probably means 'patron' i.e. that as a rich upper class woman, Priscilla provided hospitality and financial aid to Christian workers).

Priscilla and Aquila are mention many times in the New Testament (see Acts 18:1-3, 18-28; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). Read the other passages that tell us about Priscilla and Aquila.

1. How many different places do we find them in? What are they doing in each of these locations?

2. What does this tell you about their attitude to the ministry of the gospel?

Read Romans 16:25-27

What do these verses tell you about God's purpose for all nations?