



Faithfulness and Unity: Lessons from Paul's Final Greetings
By Ariel Presswood

Key Scripture:

Romans 16 – Paul's personal greetings and commendations to various members of the early church.

Objective:

This activity set is designed to provide a deep, engaging, and practical exploration of faithfulness, unity, and community within the body of Christ as exemplified in Romans 16. Through scripture study, reflective discussions, immersive hands-on activities, and personal application, participants will gain a greater understanding of how faithfulness strengthens relationships, fosters unity, and advances God's kingdom.

Through this experience, participants will:

- Recognize the significance of personal relationships in strengthening the church and the impact of faithful believers.
- Learn how to honor, appreciate, and encourage one another in the body of Christ.
- Understand the dangers of division and the importance of unity in fulfilling God's mission.
- Develop practical ways to contribute to the unity and faithfulness of their own community.
- Discover the role of encouragement, gratitude, and mutual support in building up the church.

Section 1: Reflect and Discuss

Deep Reflection Questions:

1. Why does Paul mention so many individuals by name in Romans 16? What does this reveal about his view of community?
2. How do personal relationships contribute to the strength and unity of the church?
3. What can we learn from Paul's warnings about those who cause divisions? How can we apply this in our own church communities?
4. In what ways can we honor and acknowledge the contributions of others in our faith community?
5. How does embracing diversity within the church enhance its mission and testimony to the world?
6. What are practical ways we can be faithful to the roles God has given us in our own communities?
7. Why is it important to celebrate the faithfulness of others? How does this build stronger relationships within the church?
8. What are some challenges to unity within a church or community? How can we work to overcome them?
9. How does Paul's final greeting reflect his deep love and appreciation for the people he served alongside?
10. What steps can you take to contribute to a culture of encouragement and appreciation within your church or small group?
11. How does unity among believers reflect God's heart for His people?
12. What does it mean to be faithful in your role within the church? How does your service contribute to the overall health of the body of Christ?
13. How can we intentionally strengthen our bonds with fellow believers beyond Sunday services?
14. How does showing appreciation for others uplift and encourage them in their spiritual walk?

Family or Group Discussion Prompts:

Exploring Early Church Dynamics

- Discuss the various roles individuals played in the early church as mentioned in Romans 16. How did each person's unique gifts and efforts contribute to the overall mission?
- How do modern church members reflect the same principles of faithfulness and service today?
- What would happen if some members of the church withheld their gifts and didn't contribute to the community?
- How does mutual support in the church impact the spiritual growth of individual believers?

Modern Application

- Reflect on the different roles within your own church or community. How can recognizing and appreciating these roles foster a sense of unity and shared purpose?
- Discuss the importance of working together despite differences in background, skills, or perspectives. How can embracing diversity strengthen the church?
- Identify specific ways participants can encourage and build up those who serve faithfully in the church.
- How can we actively seek to resolve conflicts in a way that promotes peace and unity?

Addressing Division

- Examine the causes of division within a community. What steps can be taken to prevent or heal divisions, ensuring a cohesive and supportive environment?
- What does Scripture teach about addressing disagreements in a way that preserves unity?
- How can humility and selflessness contribute to greater harmony in the church?

Section 2: Engaging Hands-On Activities

Activity 1: Community Appreciation Wall

Objective: Visually represent and celebrate the diverse contributions of individuals within the community.

Materials Needed:

- Large bulletin board or wall space
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Markers
- Decorative materials (e.g., stickers, ribbons)

Instructions:

1. Invite participants to write the names of individuals in their community who have positively impacted them or contributed to the church's well-being on sticky notes or index cards.
2. Encourage them to add a brief note of appreciation or a specific example of the person's contribution.
3. Have participants place their notes on the bulletin board or wall, creating a "Community Appreciation Wall."
4. Allow time for participants to read and reflect on the various contributions, fostering a sense of gratitude and unity.
5. Discuss how showing appreciation strengthens relationships and encourages continued faithfulness in service.

Activity 2: Role-Playing Unity

Objective: Practice resolving conflicts and promoting unity within a diverse community.

Materials Needed:

- Scenario cards depicting potential conflicts or challenges within a community setting

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups and provide each group with a scenario card.
2. Ask groups to role-play the scenario, focusing on effective communication, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving to promote unity.
3. After each role-play, facilitate a discussion on the strategies used and how they can be applied in real-life situations.
4. Encourage participants to reflect on ways they can actively promote peace in their own communities.

Activity 3: Unity Quilt Project

Objective: Create a tangible representation of unity amidst diversity.

Materials Needed:

- Fabric squares or paper squares
- Fabric markers or colored pens
- Sewing materials or glue
- Large piece of fabric or poster board for backing

Instructions:

1. Provide each participant with a square piece of fabric or paper.
2. Ask them to decorate their square to represent themselves, their gifts, or their role in the community.
3. Once completed, assemble the squares into a quilt by sewing them together or gluing them onto the backing material.
4. Display the quilt in a common area as a symbol of the community's unity and diversity.

Challenge of the Week:

Encourage participants to identify someone in their community whose contributions may often go unnoticed and find a way to express appreciation, whether through a handwritten note, a verbal thank you, or an act of kindness.

Social Media Engagement:

Invite participants to share stories or photos of community members making a positive impact, using a designated hashtag to foster a sense of collective appreciation and unity.



Final Reflection and Prayer:

1. Thank God for the diverse individuals He has placed within the community and their unique contributions.
2. Pray for a spirit of unity, that members may work together harmoniously to advance the gospel.
3. Ask for discernment to recognize and address any sources of division, seeking reconciliation and peace.
4. Reflect on how faithfulness in small acts contributes to a stronger, unified body of Christ.