

HONORABLE MENTION

Introduction – Paul concludes the letter to the saints in Rome with a lengthy list of people worthy of honorable mention.

A. Greetings to God's people in Rome.

Romans 16:1-15

1. Phoebe was a servant of the church in Cenchrea, a coastal port of Corinth, and is entrusted with bringing the letter of Paul to Rome.
2. These verses allude to five possible house churches. These small group settings explain the intimate character of the New Testament's instruction about one-another relationships.
3. It is remarkable how many mentions there are of women in these greetings like Phoebe. Junias was outstanding among the apostles/missionaries. Tryphena and Tryphosa were women who worked hard in the Lord. Rufus' mother, Persis, is another woman that worked to the point of exhaustion, and Nereus' sister. They were working hard making disciples.
4. We misunderstand women's role in the first century church if we read our own culture's feminist issues into a dramatically different society. Men and women were much more segregated from one another in the New Testament times.
5. Women worked among the females and men among the males. That is why we find women functioning as a deaconess/servant and apostle/missionary in Romans. They also function as prophets (Acts 20:8-9), and teaching elders/older women (Titus 2:3-5). They were financially supported by the church in certain situations, like the widows indeed (1 Timothy 5). There is no conflict between this and the clear teaching that men are called to be spiritual heads over women as leaders in house churches.

B. God is in the process of crushing Satan under our feet in fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15.

Romans 16:16-20

1. There is no official name for the church, but churches of Christ is a good one to express our nondenominational status.
2. We must be wise about what is good and innocent about evil because there are always smooth talking flatters who deceive naive people and cause divisions or put stumbling blocks in another's way.

C. Farewell prayer – Romans 16:21-27

Conclusion – Together we must work hard in fulfilling God’s mission for us at Princeton in our 21st century setting. I pray that you will receive an honorable mention in the book of life for your work here and now.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways we can serve one another and the lost in Central New Jersey?
2. How can we avoid disunity while encouraging women to use their gifts of teaching and service?