

Good Shepherd  
Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Romans 16:1-7, August 10, 2025

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- I. Introduction to this Study This week in our *Ordinary* series we meet Phoebe and others who were important in the early church. The Apostle Paul didn't plant the church in Rome nor had he been there. His letter is an introduction of himself and his understanding of the gospel of Jesus.
- II. Connecting with One Another To whom would you entrust your one and only copy of a very important document that you needed delivered to people who lived far from you? What are your reasons for your choice?
- III. Study the Text
  - a. Read Romans 16:1-2. What might be some of the reasons Paul chose Phoebe to deliver his letter to the Roman church? Does it surprise you that he chose a woman for this task? Why or why not?
  - b. Scan Romans 16:3-15. What might be some of the reasons that Paul extended greetings to so many people?
  - c. What does Paul ask the Roman Christians to do in verse 16? What might be the reasons he asked them to do this? What is the equivalent in our day of greeting each other with a holy kiss?
  - d. Bible scholars have identified five different congregations that made up the church in Rome. It is likely that the congregations were somewhat segregated from one another. Paul's instructions in verses 16 and 17 may indicate his desire that they become more unified. What are some of the issues or perspectives that cause Christians to self-segregate from one another? How can these be rectified?
  - e. The courage of Phoebe is seen in her willingness to step into uncomfortable circumstances. What circumstances have you faced that required courage? What helped you to find courage?
  - f. Phoebe's role as a deacon and a benefactor provided opportunity for showing compassion to others in need. What roles and relationships are you in that might provide opportunities for showing compassion to those in need?
  - g. What are some ways we can encourage young people in the church to be open to God's call to ministry? GSPC has a particular opportunity and responsibility to



girls and young women whom God might be calling to ordained ministry. How can we help them to be open to receive the call?

- IV. Prayer Pray that we may have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to receive, the opportunities for ministry that God brings into our lives. Pray for the courage to move beyond comfort and the compassion to extend care to those whom God puts in your path.

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Background on the book of Romans: *"We know from Acts 18:1-2 that the church in Rome had existed for some time and was made up of both Jewish and non-Jewish followers. The crisis for this church began when the Roman emperor Claudius expelled all of the Jewish people from Rome. About five years later all those Jews, including many who followed Jesus, were allowed to return. When they did, they found a church that had become non-Jewish in its customs and practice. This culture clash created lots of tension; and by Paul's day, the Roman church was divided. They disagreed about how to follow Jesus, debating about whether or not non-Jewish Christians should observe the Sabbath, eat kosher, be circumcised, and so on. Paul wrote this letter to accomplish a few things. He wanted this divided community to become unified once again. For a practical purpose, he hoped that the Roman church could become a staging ground for his mission to go even further west, reaching to Spain. These tense circumstances motivated Paul to write out his fullest explanation of the Gospel: the good news that announces Jesus' life, death, and resurrection."* from The Bible Project [bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans](https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans)
- b. Read Romans 16:7. This verse is the only place in the NT where a woman is called an apostle. Note that some Bible translations say *Junias* (a man's name) instead of *Junia* (woman's name). The oldest and most reliable of the Greek manuscripts say *Junia* or *Julia*; both are women's names. John Chrysostom, an early Church Father, biblical interpreter, and archbishop of Constantinople wrote: *"Greet Andronicus and Junia . . . who are outstanding among the apostles": To be an apostle is something great. But to be outstanding among the apostles— just think what a wonderful song of praise that is! They were outstanding on the basis of their works and virtuous actions. Indeed, how great the wisdom of this woman must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle. It seems that women had a more significant role in the early church than first believed. What is your experience with women in ministry?*

