

Romans 15:14-33
October 11, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When you hear the word “ministry,” what comes to mind? [Programs led by Christians to help people know God, etc]

Q: How many of us should have a ministry? [All of us! I think about the Great Commission, or being called into the “ministry of reconciliation.”]

Q: Let me check in with you. What is your ministry these days? [Allow for some to be quick with answers, while some will be pensive]

It has been my experience that when I explore this question with believers over the years, I sense some frustration with it for a couple of reasons. First, some believers have never felt like they’ve had a real ministry as they understand “ministry.” Second, we’ve all been taught that we were created for a purpose. God gifted each of us in such a way that when we come together as the body of Christ, all of us can contribute in meaningful ways. Yet, not all Christians feel they know their “purpose.”

Transition: Today I hope to bring everyone encouragement. Paul is going to uncover for us why his ministry was so effective. It will be so basic! As we read today’s text, I want you to consider that as Christ-followers we can have an effective ministry by recognizing the ELEMENTS that must be present in order for it to be effective. Let’s find the ELEMENTS.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Romans 15:14-22]

V.14:

- I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. (Affirm your students)

V.15:

- I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me (God gives us GRACE to do His work)

V.16:

- to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Ministry should always help people move toward Jesus)

V.17:

- Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. (Our ministry should glorify God)

V.18:

- I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—

V.19:

- by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

V.20:

- It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

V.21:

- Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

V.22:

- This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

Process Observations/Questions:

We are on mission to discover the ELEMENTS necessary to have an impactful ministry. Let's start back at v.14 and start identifying the elements of ministry:

- Strong interpersonal skills – v.14 Notice that Paul respected the feelings of others and used effective principles of interpersonal relations. He was not afraid to affirm his students so to speak. He had a high opinion of those he led.

Q: How important is affirming others? How does that help in ministry? [If you've ever taught in a classroom or coached or whatever, you understand how important it is to affirm someone's growth – no matter how far along they are.]

- Ministry is entrusted to us by God's grace – v.15

Q: Was grace only given to Paul to minister to others? [Of course not! Whatever He has equipped us to do is given to us by His grace, not by our works or own strength.]

Observation: It's not just grace that God gives us, but he equips us with spiritual gifts to partner with Him to build His kingdom. [X-REF Eph 4:10-13] So the Lord gives us both the grace and the gifts to do His work effectively.

- Ministry is centered in the Gospel – v.16

Q: Why do you think the Gospel should be a part of ministry? [Whatever we do, our ministry should ultimately be drawing others closer to Christ. If people are growing in their spiritual walk, then this is happening.]

Observation: (John 8:28) When Christ is lifted up, God draws people unto Himself.

- Ministry is done for God's Glory – v.17

Observation: I am reminded of John 15:1-5 where Christ is the vine and we are the branches. "Apart from Him we can do nothing." If we are doing ministry in our flesh, or attempting it in our own strength, the ministry will not thrive, nor is it for His glory.

- Ministry is done in the power of the Holy Spirit – v.18-19

Observation: The Spirit of God empowered Paul to share the Word, and the purpose was to “make the Gentiles obedient” (Rom. 15:18). It was “by word and deed” that the apostle shared the Good News. We may not be able to perform miracles today, since this was a special apostolic gift. But “by word and deed” we can share the love of God with the lost around us. Changes in conduct and character are just as much miracles as the healing of the sick.

- Ministry is according to God’s plan – v.20-24

Q: Have you noticed that ministry is most effective when it happens by His timing and leadership? Sometimes we can have the greatest ideas for ministry, but if it is not in His plan for us to do, He will let us know. Either we move forward without His empowerment, and it doesn’t take off, or we wait for Him to show us the timing.

Transition: Keep in mind that Paul is writing to a group of people whom he had never met as a group. Paul had never visited the city of Rome or its churches at this point. However, in the remainder of this chapter, he tells us why he hasn’t made it to Rome yet, but he certainly desires to make the trip! Let’s read it.

[Read Romans 15:23-33]

V.23:

- But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you,

V.24:

- I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.

V.25:

- Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there.

V.26:

- For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

V.27:

- They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

V.28:

- So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way.

V.29:

- I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

V.30:

- urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

V.31:

- Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there,

V.32:

- so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.
- V.33:
- The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What is Paul's first stop? [Jerusalem to deliver a special offering from the Gentile church in Greece (Macedonia and Achaia) for the suffering saints in Jerusalem.]

Q: What made this offering so special in Paul's mind?

- It was an expression of love to their Jewish brethren
- They voluntarily contributed ("were pleased")
- The Gentiles owed it to them as they have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, so the Gentiles chose to share their material blessings.

Q: So after he delivers the offering in Jerusalem, where does he plan to travel? [He would go to Spain and visit the Romans on the way.]

Q: Look at v.30-33 – what is the apostle Paul looking for from his readers? [Intercessory Prayer – Prayer is one of the most effective ways we can share in the ministry of others.]

LOOK:

All of us can have an effective ministry for the Lord by making sure the elements we learned in today's lesson is an integral part of it:

Summarize the ELEMENTS of Ministry:

- An effective ministry is characterized by strong interpersonal skills to affirm others
- An effective ministry is undergirded by God's grace
- An effective ministry has the gospel as its centerpiece
- An effective ministry focuses on giving God the Glory
- An effective ministry is done through the power of the Holy Spirit
- An effective ministry is done according to God's plan and timing

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 563–565). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:14–24)

Unless we understand the distinctive ministry of Paul, we will not fully appreciate the message of God's grace. Paul explained the characteristics of his ministry.

It was received by grace (vv. 14–15). When he was Saul of Tarsus, the crusading rabbi, Paul knew little of the grace of God. He persecuted the church and sought to destroy it. When Paul met Jesus Christ on the Damascus road (Acts 9), he experienced the grace of God. It was God's grace that saved him, and it was God's grace that called him and made him an apostle (1 Cor. 15:8–11). "We have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name" (Rom. 1:5). In Ephesians 3, Paul explained his ministry to the Gentiles in greater detail.

It was centered in the Gospel (v. 16). As mentioned before, Paul used two different words for *minister* in this verse, but the emphasis is on priestly service. Paul looked on himself as a priest at the altar, offering up to God the Gentiles he had won to Christ. They were a "spiritual sacrifice" to the glory of God (see 1 Peter 2:5). Even his preaching of the Gospel was a "priestly duty" (NIV). This insight into ministry certainly adds dignity and responsibility to our service. It was important that the priests offer to God only that which was the best (see Mal. 1:6–14).

Note the involvement of the Trinity in the ministry of the Word. Paul was the minister of Jesus Christ; he preached "the Gospel of God"; and he served in the power of the Holy Spirit of God who sanctified his ministry. What a privilege, and yet what a responsibility, to be the servant of the Triune God, winning the lost to Jesus Christ! We must remember that soul-winning is a priestly ministry, a sacred obligation. And we must serve the Lord with dedication and devotion just as the priest in the temple.

It was done for God's glory (v. 17). "Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God" (NIV). The word translated "glory" carries the idea of "boast, take pride in." Paul used it before in Romans 2:17, 23; 5:2–3, 11 ("joy"); 3:27; and 4:2. Paul was not bragging about his ministry. He was boasting in what the Lord had done. The apostle did not serve and suffer as he did just to make a name for himself, for he had a much higher purpose in mind. He wanted to bring glory to Jesus Christ. "That in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

It was done by God's power (vv. 18–19). The Holy Spirit empowered Paul to minister, and enabled him to perform mighty signs and wonders. The miracles God gave Paul to do were "signs" in that they came from God and revealed Him to others. And they were "wonders" in that they aroused the wonder of the people. But their purpose was always to open the way for the preaching of the Gospel. Miracles were given to authenticate the messenger and the message (Heb. 2:1–4). Miracles *by themselves* can never save the lost. When Paul healed the crippled man at Lystra (Acts 14), the immediate response was pagan: the people called Paul and Barnabas gods and tried to worship them! When Paul shared the Gospel with them, they did not respond so enthusiastically. Finally, the people stoned Paul and left him for dead outside the city walls.

The Spirit of God empowered Paul to share the Word, and the purpose was to "make the Gentiles obedient" (Rom. 15:18). It was "by word and deed" that the apostle shared the Good News.

We may not be able to perform miracles today, since this was a special apostolic gift. But “by word and deed” we can share the love of God with the lost around us. Changes in conduct and character are just as much miracles as the healing of the sick.

It was according to God's plan (vv. 20–24). God had a special plan for Paul to follow: he was not to preach where any other apostle had ministered. (This is one evidence that Peter had not founded the churches at Rome, or had been to Rome; for this would have prevented Paul from going there.) “From Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum” (Rom. 15:19) covers about 1,400 miles! When you consider the slowness of travel and the dangers involved (2 Cor. 11:26–27), you can appreciate the tremendous achievement of Paul’s missionary ministry. While it is not wrong to enter into another man’s labors (John 4:38), it is also good to have a pioneer ministry and take the Gospel to new territory. Paul cited Isaiah 52:15 as the divine approval for this kind of ministry.

The vast area of opportunity in other parts of the empire kept Paul from visiting Rome sooner. He was not hindered from going to Rome by satanic opposition or physical obstacles, but by the challenge of completing his work right where he was. He was so faithful in his evangelistic outreach that he was able to say that he had no more place to minister in those parts. This did not mean that Paul personally witnessed to every person in that area, but that he took the Gospel and left behind witnessing churches and Christians who would carry on the work. Paul finished one job before he started another one, a good example for our evangelistic ministry today.

Paul’s desire for many years had been to visit Rome and then move on to Spain, but there is no record that he ever did. Tradition says that he did go to Spain, and possibly to Britain, after he was released, but church tradition is not always to be trusted.

The Gentiles’ Ministry to the Jews (Rom. 15:25–33)

Paul and his associates had received a special offering from the Gentile churches in Greece for the suffering Jewish saints in Jerusalem. Details about this collection are recorded in 2 Corinthians 8–9. There were several purposes behind this special offering. To begin with, it was an expression of love on the part of the Gentiles toward their Jewish brethren. Second, it meant practical relief at a time when the poor Jewish believers needed it the most. Third, it helped to unite Jews and Gentiles in the church. It was a bond that brought them closer together.

Paul looked on this offering as the paying of a debt. The Gentiles had received *spiritual* wealth from the Jews. They now returned *material* wealth, paying their debt. Paul considered himself a “debtor” to the whole world (Rom. 1:14). He also considered the Gentile Christians debtors to the Jews, for it was the Jews who gave to the Gentiles the Word of God and the Son of God. We Christians ought to feel an obligation to Israel, and to pay that debt by praying for Israel, sharing the Gospel, and helping in a material way. Anti-Semitism has no place in the life of a dedicated Christian.

Not only was this offering a payment of a debt, but it was also “fruit” (Rom. 15:28). It was not “loot” that Paul stole from the churches! It was fruit—the natural result of their walk with the Lord (see John 15:1–8).

When the life of the Spirit flows through a church, giving is no problem. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 8:1–5, described the miracle of grace that occurred in the churches of Macedonia.

Paul was anxious that this offering be received by the Jewish believers and be acceptable to them. He wanted to bring about, under God, a closer bond between the mother church at Jerusalem and the daughter churches in other parts of the empire. Unfortunately, there were still

Jews who opposed the message of grace to the Gentiles and who wanted the Gentiles to become Jews and accept the Jewish Law. (Bible students call these people “Judaizers.” They followed Paul wherever he went and tried to steal his churches from him. The Epistle to the Galatians was written to combat their evil works.)

The words “strive together” in Romans 15:30 suggest an athlete giving his best in the contest. Perhaps the words “wrestling together” better express the idea. This same term is used of the praying of Epaphras in Colossians 4:12. This verse does not mean that we must fight with God to get what we need. Rather, it means our praying must not be a casual experience that has no heart or earnestness. We should put as much fervor into our praying as a wrestler does into his wrestling!

Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 496–498). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

VII. Concluding Remarks (15:14–16:27)

Though all Paul’s letters have closing remarks, he devoted more space to them in Romans than in any other epistle. This was due at least in part to the fact that he had never visited the city and its churches and to his desire to establish personal relationships with his readers. Another factor undoubtedly was his plan to visit Rome in the future.

A. *Personal plans (15:14–33)*

In writing to a group of people whom he had never met as a group, Paul showed admirable restraint in avoiding personal references to himself. Only once did he use himself as an example (7:7–25), and his other personal remarks are few (1:8–16; 9:1–3; 10:1–2; 11:1). Now as he closed his letter he felt led to discuss his philosophy of ministry and his plans in light of it.

15:14–16. Paul had demonstrated in this letter and elsewhere his ability to be straightforward, even almost blunt, and forceful. Yet he also had a deep concern for the feelings of others and an ability to use effective principles of interpersonal relations. This is seen in his statement, **I myself am convinced** (perf. tense, “I stand convinced”; cf. 8:38), **my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge** (perf. tense, “having been filled with all knowledge,” not in the absolute sense, but in the sense that they had an understanding of the full scope of Christian truth), **and competent** (lit., “being able”) **to instruct** (*nouthetein*, “to counsel, admonish”; cf. Col. 1:28; 3:16) **one another**. Paul did not have a low opinion of the Roman Christians; on the contrary he considered them spiritually informed and spiritually mature. Why then did he write on such basic Christian themes? Paul explained, **I have written** (past tense, “I wrote”) **you quite boldly on some points** (lit., “in some measure”) **as if to remind you of them again**. This was what Peter did as well (2 Peter 1:12; 3:1–2).

Paul was qualified to remind his readers of those points **because** he had his special position as a result of God’s **grace** (cf. Rom. 1:5). He was a **minister** (*leitourgon*, a “public servant”) **to the Gentiles**. This ministry was carried out as a **priestly duty** (the Gr. verb *hierourgounta* means “to work in sacred things”) and involved his **proclaiming the gospel of God** (cf. 1:2–4). Because of his sharing the good news with **Gentiles** (11:13; Gal. 1:16; 2:2, 7–9; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:27; 2 Tim. 4:17) they became **an offering acceptable** (the words **to God** are not in the text but are obviously understood), **sanctified** (perf. tense, “having been sanctified” or “having been set

apart”) **by the Holy Spirit** (cf. 1 Peter 1:2). Like a priest, Paul introduced Gentiles to God, and then presented them like an offering to the Lord. God’s willingness to accept Gentiles, set apart by the work of the Holy Spirit, shows His plan in the Church Age is to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eph. 3:6).

15:17–19. As a result of his special ministry by God’s grace to the Gentiles, Paul affirmed, **Therefore I glory** (lit., “I have boasting”) **in Christ Jesus in my service to God** (lit., “in the things relating to God”). This was no boasting in mere human achievements, as Paul explained: **I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God** (lit., “unto the obedience of the Gentiles”). “Obedience” is a synonym for coming to Christ (cf. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:2; cf. “obey” in Rom. 16:26) for God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

Paul recognized that all credit goes to Christ. And yet Paul was involved; God worked **by what he had said and done**. The apostle had been used by God to perform **signs** (*sēmeiōn*, miracles that signify theological truths) **and miracles** (*teratōn*, miracles that produce wonder). Luke referred to a miracle God performed through Paul at Cyprus (Acts 13:11, making Elymas blind), “signs and wonders” at Iconium (Acts 14:3; cf. Acts 15:12) and miracles at Lystra (Acts 14:8–10, 19–20), Ephesus (Acts 19:11–12), Troas (Acts 20:9–12), and Malta (Acts 28:1–8). Signs, wonders, and miracles authenticated the work of the apostles (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3–4). And all this, Paul said, was **through the power of the Spirit** (cf. Rom. 15:13). Anything Paul achieved that was worthy of praise had God’s grace as its source, Jesus Christ as its motivation and goal, and the Holy Spirit as its energy.

The result was that Paul preached the gospel **from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum**. Literally, this reads, “from Jerusalem and in a circle (i.e., Jerusalem and its environs) even to Illyricum.” “The gospel of God” (v. 16) is here called **the gospel of Christ**. The New Testament records several of Paul’s visits to Jerusalem after his conversion (Acts 9:26–28 [cf. Gal. 1:17–19]; Acts 11:27–30; 15:2 [cf. Gal. 2:1]; Acts 18:22). In the last reference Jerusalem is not named, but the words “he went up and greeted the church” obviously refers to the church at Jerusalem. Paul’s visit to Illyricum is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. This area, also known as Dalmatia, corresponds approximately to modern-day Yugoslavia. It is west and north of Greece (see the location on the map between Acts and Rom.). At one time Titus went to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). A logical suggestion is that Paul went into Illyricum from Macedonia while waiting for a response to 2 Corinthians before going on to Corinth (Acts 20:1–3; 2 Cor. 13:1–2, 10). This visit was fresh in his mind since Corinth was the city where he wrote Romans (see the *Introduction* to Rom.).

15:20–22. Reference to the geographical extent of his ministry (v. 19) led Paul to declare something of his philosophy of outreach: **It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known** (lit., “named”). Paul purposed to be a true pioneer evangelist, opening virgin territory to the good news of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. This was **so that he would not be building on someone else’s foundation** (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10). Paul then expressed his ministry goal in a quotation of the second half of Isaiah 52:15 and explained, **This is why I have often been hindered** (imperf. tense, “I was being hindered many times”) **from coming to you**. Up to this time Paul had always found new areas for ministry in Asia Minor and the Grecian Peninsula so that he had not yet felt free to look beyond to Rome and Spain.

15:23–24. Perhaps his visit to Illyricum convinced Paul that no more virgin territory for the gospel lay in Asia Minor and the Grecian Peninsula. This does not mean that he had visited every center, but the gospel had been introduced and local churches had been established that could

complete the work (cf. Acts 19:8–10). At any rate Paul concluded, **There is no more place for me to work in these regions** (lit., “having no more place in these regions”). Coupled with this was his **longing for many years to see** the Roman Christians. At the beginning of this epistle he had expressed this desire to visit them (Rom. 1:10–11, 13). Paul continued, **I plan to do so** (this clause does not occur in the Gr. text, but the idea is implied) **when** (the indefiniteness of the Gr. clause requires “whenever”) **I go to Spain** (cf. 15:28). Spain was then a Roman colony where many Jews lived; it was the western limit of the empire. He hoped **to visit** them **while passing through**. Apparently he did not plan a long stay in Rome. They could then **assist him on his journey there** (lit., “and by you to be sent forward there”); that is, they would encourage him on to Spain. Paul would proceed to Spain only **after** he had **enjoyed** (lit., “I am filled full with,” “I am satisfied with”) their **company for a while**. Paul paid the Roman believers the sincere compliment that their fellowship would refresh and satisfy him spiritually (cf. 1:13). He also wanted to impart a spiritual gift to them, thereby strengthening them (1:11) and to have some spiritual harvest among them (1:13), that is, to be able to help them grow in Christ.

15:25–27. Paul balanced his tentative plans for the future with the business immediately at hand. **I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there** (lit., “ministering [*diakonōn*] to the saints”). Paul’s visit to Jerusalem was to deliver the voluntary offering from churches **for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem** (cf. Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:13–14; 9:12–13; Gal. 2:10). The churches of Asia Minor contributed to the offering also, but Paul mentioned only **Macedonia and Achaia**, the areas closest to Rome and those on his mind for obvious reasons. (See the location of these two portions of Greece on the map between Acts and Rom.)

The voluntary nature of the **contribution** (*koinōnian*, “fellowship”) is stressed by the repetition of the verb, **were pleased** (cf. Rom. 15:26–27; 2 Cor. 8:10–12). At the same time Paul recognized the churches had an obligation: **Indeed they owe it to them** (lit., “and they are debtors to them”). This sense of moral obligation had undoubtedly prompted Paul to suggest the offering. Since **the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings** (lit., “in their spiritual things”; cf. Rom. 11:11–12, 17–18; 15:12; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 3:6), Gentile Christians certainly ought **to share with** (*leitourgēsai*, “to minister to, serve”; cf. *leitourgon* in Rom. 15:16) the Jews **their material blessings** (lit., “in fleshly things”; cf. Gal. 6:6).

15:28–29. Again Paul said that **after** going to Jerusalem he would **go to Spain and visit** the Romans **on the way** (cf. v. 24). Paul got to Rome, but not when or in the manner he anticipated! (Acts 27–28) Whether he ever got to Spain no one knows for sure. Christians should plan ahead, but they should also be flexible. Paul, not boastfully but simply confident of God’s provision, promised that his visit would be a spiritual blessing to the Roman Christians: **I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ**, that is, with Christ’s blessing to share with them (cf. Rom. 1:11–13).

15:30–33. The Apostle Paul recognized his need for intercessory prayer support from his readers and asked for it again and again (Eph. 6:19–20; Col. 4:3–4; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1–2; Phile. 22). Here he entreated the Romans **by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to join him in his struggle** through prayer. “The love of the Spirit” is probably the love given by the Spirit (cf. Rom. 5:5), not love for the Spirit. Recognizing that divine love, they would be motivated to pray. A Christian’s intercession is a means of sharing in the ministry of others.

Paul’s specific request was **that he would be rescued from the unbelievers** (lit., “the disobedient”) **in Judea and that his service** (*diakonia*) **in Jerusalem would be acceptable to**

the saints. Paul was aware of the problems that lay before him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23), and he was deeply concerned that the offering from the Gentile Christians be delivered and distributed properly. If these objectives were accomplished, according to Paul, he could then **by God's will** go to them **with joy and ... be refreshed** with them. The word rendered "refreshed" suggests that Paul would be able to rest or relax with them in the knowledge of a job well done. Paul closed this section with a brief benediction: **The God of peace** (cf. Rom. 16:20; also cf. "the God of hope," 15:13) **be with you all. Amen.** This is the third benediction in this chapter (cf. vv. 5, 13).

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