

EMPOWERED SERVANTS

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

Romans 15:1–13

VERSES TO REMEMBER

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Rom. 15:5–6)

Daily Bible Readings

| Daily Bible Readings | | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| M | June 10 | Luke 22:25–30 | Servant Leadership |
| T | June 11 | Acts 1:1–11 | You Shall Receive Power |
| W | June 12 | Isa. 61 | Anointed by God |
| Th | June 13 | Ps. 133–134 | How Pleasant to Live in Unity |
| F | June 14 | Eph. 4:1–7 | Bear with One Another in Love |
| Sa | June 15 | Phil. 2:1–13 | Embrace the Mind of Christ |

STEPPING INTO THE WORD

Romans 15:1–13 is best understood if its placement in the last part of the epistle is recognized. Generally, biblical scholars recognize that chapters 12:1–15:13 comprise a penultimate unit before the conclusion of the letter (15:14–16:27). The first section contains *general instructions* for how believers are to interact with the culture around them (12:2). The second part, in 15:14 through the conclusion of the letter, provides specific guidelines to the members of the church in Rome.

The first section discusses directions that apply to any Christians no matter where they live: the virtues of humility, the use of God’s gifts, the importance of forgiveness, relationships between the church and government, the danger of judging others in differences of opinion about religion and dietary laws, and the proper way to treat neighbors. Probably some of the examples stem from concerns and conflicts that exist in the congregation in Rome, but they are inclusive enough to be of interest to any readers.

The second section (15:4–16:27) is where Paul addresses specific issues and people. He discusses his travel plans, his trip to Jerusalem to deliver the offering given by the Macedonian congregation to help those besieged by a

famine, and his desire to begin a ministry in Spain (there is no evidence that he actually made that trip).

In the final chapter, he addresses nearly thirty different people by name, often with detailed comments about several of them. It is significant, moreover, how many women are active in the congregation: Phoebe, who is a full-fledged deacon; Prisca; Mary; Junia (who may have been a relative of his); Tryphaena and Tryphosa (sisters?); Rufas' mother; and Julia, Nereus' sister.

Dear God, help us remember the diversity of all those who were active in leadership in the early church. Amen.



SCRIPTURE

Romans 15:1–13

15:1 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ²Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. ³For Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name”;

¹⁰and again he says,

“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

¹¹and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”;

¹²and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope.”

