



Community Group Discussion Guide

May 19, 2024

1 Corinthians 16:10-24 | Firm in the Faith

MOTIVATE

Starter Questions:

- ⇒ *What are final instructions you usually give to family members when you are about to go somewhere?*
- ⇒ *Why is it sometimes hard to just simply say goodbye?*

DISCUSS

Having dealt with a number of crucial doctrinal and practical issues in his letter, Paul came to some final matters in 1 Corinthians 16:10-24. He concluded this first letter to the Corinthians with additional instructions, greetings, and a farewell. Paul also expressed his hopes for the Corinthians' continued faithfulness to Christ.

At first it may seem difficult to apply sections of Scripture that include Paul's travel plans and greetings, but, as we look more closely, we can see that these have much to teach us. Through Paul's example as well as through his instruction, this chapter challenges us to support other believers.

1 Corinthians 16:10-11 *When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. 11 So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.*

Paul wrote about the coming arrival of Timothy in Corinth. Timothy was a friend and trusted coworker of Paul as well as the recipient of two of Paul's letters: 1 and 2 Timothy. Apparently, Paul feared some in the Corinthian church might not welcome Timothy in the way that they should receive one so committed to the Lord's work. Paul wanted to ensure that the church accepted Timothy and that this young pastor had no reason to be concerned.

Timothy may have been a timid person (2 Timothy 1:7) and might have been in poor health (1 Timothy 5:23). In addition, Timothy's close association with Paul may have biased Paul's opponents against him. Regardless, Paul insisted that Timothy should be treated well upon his arrival. Paul also encouraged the church to send Timothy on his way in peace, not making an attempt to hinder his ministerial travels.

It is uncertain which "brothers" Paul spoke of in verses 11 and 12. Whoever they were, Paul expressed his respect and love for them by calling them this. Whatever the case, Paul wanted Timothy to return to him before his own departure for Corinth.

- ⇒ ***Discuss this quote: Paul's words remind us to treat representatives and subordinates of Christian leaders with the same respect and consideration that we give to the leaders themselves.¹***
- ⇒ ***How can our Community Group show respect and consideration to those involved in ministry who are guests in our church?***
- ⇒ ***Can you think of a specific person to whom our Community Group could minister? (For example: missionaries who are home on furlough.)***

1 Corinthians 16:12-14 Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity. ***13*** Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ***14*** Let all that you do be done in love.

Paul's use of the phrase "now concerning our brother Apollos" indicates Paul was responding to a question the Corinthians had raised to him about Apollos. This passage does not mention what the Corinthians had asked. Apollos was well known in the early church for his eloquent speech. Paul knew Apollos to be a teacher who had watered the church that Paul himself had planted in Corinth. Paul responded positively, in spite of the trouble caused by those who were overly loyal to Apollos. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that Apollos was not the source of some of the divisions in the church.

To avoid misunderstandings, Paul stated expressly that, against his strong urging, Apollos had been unwilling to travel to Corinth. Yet, Paul assured the Corinthians that Apollos would come at some point. Apollos' reluctance to go could reflect his desire to wait for a more opportune time when things had settled down in Corinth.

- ⇒ ***Why would Paul have been concerned about ensuring strong, godly leadership was consistently in Corinth?***
- ⇒ ***Both Timothy and Apollos were to travel "with the brothers?" What does this indicate about the importance of having partners in ministry?***

In verse 13-14 Paul presented several central Christian exhortations:

1. Be on your guard: There are three possible interpretations of what Paul may have meant:
 - Remain expectant of Christ's return. This implies a readiness that includes a lifestyle of holiness and service to Him.
 - Be alert to false teachers and destructive influences.
 - Stay vigilant in prayer.

- ⇒ ***Why were each of these vital to the Corinthians? Why are these vital to our faith today?***

2. Stand firm in the faith: Early church believers faced many challenges that tested their faithfulness. Paul frequently used terminology like this to indicate the perseverance believers should display in the face of adversity and strife.

- ⇒ ***What is your greatest challenge in standing firm in your faith?***

¹ Blomberg, C. (1994). [1 Corinthians](#) (p. 334). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

3. Be strong men of courage: Throughout Scripture, God's people are encouraged to be strong and courageous as we face opposition. Paul was asking the Corinthians to conduct themselves in a brave way both in the problems they faced from within the church and from without.

- ⇒ ***From within: Why is courage often called for when there is divisiveness in the church?***
- ⇒ ***From without: Discuss this quote: God calls Christians to a way of life that will be opposed by the world. In this hostile world, it is essential that followers of Christ be courageous and strong. Christians can do this in the face of strong opposition because their victory is sure in Christ, who has already overcome the world.***

4. Do everything in love: Paul wanted the Corinthians to remember the importance of a theme he emphasized and exalted many times in his letter: to show love in everything. This reminder was important for a church riddled with strife. Love for God and for each other was to motivate and guide everything they did.

- ⇒ ***How do Paul's words relate to Henderson Hills' vision statement? Compelling Love: We demonstrate the love of Jesus by respecting the dignity of every person, sacrificing for our neighbors, and cultivating unity within our faith family.***

1 Corinthians 16:15-18 *Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— **16** be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. **17** I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, **18** for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.*

Paul appealed to the Corinthians one last time as "brothers" because he wanted them to listen to what he had to say as it pertained to the need to respect the leadership of particular men: the household of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus.

Paul commended the household of Stephanas for their faithful service. With their devotion to other believers (the saints), the church in Corinth had benefited. These servants were due honor for their efforts and sacrifice.

Nothing else is known about Fortunatus or Achaicus, although the former was a Hellenistic name often adopted by a freed slave (meaning "fortunate"). It is possible both of these men were part of Stephanas's household, once slaves but now more like employees. While we have no way of being sure who they were, their arrival refreshed Paul's spirit as well as the believers at Corinth. As such, they were worthy of proper recognition and appreciation.

- ⇒ ***Why should we respect all those who serve our church faithfully?***
- ⇒ ***How can we as a Community Group honor and recognize them?***
- ⇒ ***How could our appreciation refresh the spirit of our leaders and faithful servants?***

1 Corinthians 16:19-20 *The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. **20** All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.*

Paul mentioned a number of Christians who sent greetings to the Corinthian church in order to remind these believers that they did not stand alone against the world. Many other believers stood united with them.

⇒ ***Why is it vital for all believers to know with certainty that we are not alone?***

First, Paul began with greetings from the churches of Asia. "Asia" referred to the Roman province of Asia, which occupied the western portion of modern Turkey, including Ephesus, from which Paul wrote this letter. Paul had ministered throughout Asia, establishing churches in Ephesus, Colosse, Laodicia, and Hierapolis.

Second, Paul made special mention of his coworkers, Aquila and Priscilla, both of whom were loved by the Corinthians. This husband and wife played a prominent role throughout the Book of Acts and Paul's letters. They provided lodging for Paul during his visit in Corinth, and they traveled to Ephesus where they met Apollos and instructed him in the ways of Christ (Acts 18:24–26). Third, Paul mentioned greetings from the church that met at the home of Aquila and Priscilla. Early Christian churches customarily met in homes.

Fourth, Paul extended the greetings of the brothers in Ephesus. All the believers who were with Paul at the time extended their warm affection and respect to the believers at Corinth.

In light of the unity of faith and affection expressed in these various greetings, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to continue the same expressions of love to one another. They were to "greet one another with a holy kiss." The exchange of kisses among family members and beloved friends was not unusual in Paul's day. The custom was for men to touch cheeks in greeting. The adjective "holy" makes it plain that this practice connoted nothing sexual or romantic.²

⇒ ***While we may not "greet one another with a holy kiss," what are some common ways in our culture for Christian brothers and sisters to greet each other?***

⇒ ***How can our Community Group express love for each other?***

1 Corinthians 16:21-24 *I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. 22 If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

Paul concluded his first letter to the Corinthians with his standard greetings, a warning, and his grace benediction. To do this, Paul picked up the pen and papyrus to write these closing words in his own hand. This demonstrated his personal affection for the Corinthian believers. In no other letter does he end with this kind of statement of his love, but it was profoundly needed in fractured Corinth.³

⇒ ***Why would a personal greeting from Paul be so meaningful to the Corinthians?***

In verse 22, Paul spoke to those people who demonstrated by their beliefs or actions that they were unbelievers despite professing to be Christians. The realization that such deceivers infiltrate the

² Pratt, R. L., Jr. (2000). *I & II Corinthians* (Vol. 7, p. 288). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³ Blomberg, C. (1994). *1 Corinthians* (p. 342). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

church caused Paul to cry out, "Our Lord, come!" He prayed that Christ would punish those who brought trouble to the church through their pretense of faith.

⇒ ***How do Paul's words show us how seriously we need to view faithfulness to Christ in light of His imminent return?***

Paul hoped good things for the Corinthian church. He offered a blessing over them, praying that they would enjoy the grace of God throughout their lives. Paul again declared his deep affection for these believers, sending his love to all of them in Christ Jesus. To confirm his love, Paul added "Amen"—meaning "let it be so."

⇒ ***Why is love the most important emotion believers should have for one another?***

⇒ ***What encouragements for the life of faith might we claim from Paul's concluding exhortations?***

TRANSFORM

Make personal application: Paul's love for his co-laborers in ministry as well as the new believers in Corinth is obvious in his closing remarks.

⇒ ***What can we learn from Paul?***

⇒ ***What is a specific way you will show love to another believer today?***

⇒ ***How can our Community Group become one that is well known for its love?***

Pray: Thank God specifically for leaders in our church and others who serve. Ask Him to bless them in a special way today. Pray for God to increase our love for one another and to guard our hearts against divisiveness.

STUDY

Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

- *Holman New Testament Commentary, 1 and 2 Corinthians, pages 279-293.*
- *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 Corinthians, pages 331-344.*
- *Shepherd's Notes, 1 Corinthians, pages 98-99.*