

Receiving Christ's Servants

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and that you help her in whatever matter she may need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well. (Romans 16:1-2, NASB)

Phoebe was apparently coming to the church in Rome from her home church in Cenchrea, near Corinth, Greece. Reading Paul's comments about how he wanted her received made me think of how God's servants are sometimes received by the church.

Friends, let's be honest:

1. Our emotions are more human than we'd like to admit. And we sometimes react to each other on an emotional level, rather than on a rational level.
2. We often react to each other's personalities, cultural traits, and abilities out of self-interest. We like people who make us feel comfortable. We don't like those whom we perceive as threatening our interests. In our inner reactions to people, we can be petty, territorial, and downright jealous.

In these verses I see three reasons why we should receive all Christ's servants with respect.

"Receive her in the Lord." Because I truly love Christ, I want to love those He loves. I want to embrace those He has embraced, though they may have as many faults as I do.

"Receive her...in a manner worthy of the saints." Jesus considers that person one of His "holy ones", which is the literal translation of the word for "saints". He has set them apart for himself. As His humble servant, I need to treat them as worthy of that honor.

"Receive her...for she herself has also been a helper of many." We sometimes fail to respect those whom God has mightily used for His children's welfare. We devalue those whose work Christ values so highly. Somewhere there are people who have been blessed, lifted, and drawn to Christ by that person. And for that, they deserve our full acceptance and genuine respect.

May the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. (Romans 15:5-7, NASB)

Hymn: [Philippians 2:1-8](#)