

I. Intro: Romans 16

- A. Comes at the end of the greatest theological work ever written
- B. A long list of personal greetings – why?
- C. Meditation of God's grace *never* lose sight of the people who have been redeemed.
- D. The Gospel means that relationships are created and healed.

II. Ordinary life of the New Testament church was highly localized.

- A. church as house (Acts 2:2; 5:42; 8:3; 10:42; 12:12; 16:15,31-34; 20:20; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 16:19; Colossians 4:15; 1 Timothy 2:8; Philemon 2; leadership in 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12,15; 5:4-8,13-14; openness to outsiders 1 Corinthians 14:16,23-25; discipline 1 Corinthians 5:3-5,9-13)
- B. church as city (Acts 17:14; 19:22; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10; 2 Corinthians 7-8; Philippians 2:19,25)
- C. church as larger network (Acts 1:8; 15)
- D. Evangelicals: now more confessionally divided than geographically

III. How could a church best reflect this biblical structure?

- A. Highly localized church life (more on that below)
- B. Citywide gatherings and efforts
- C. Accountability outside the city
- D. Respect the structure we are part of while working to build local bridges

IV. The power of highly local church life

- A. In many ways, it's easier!
- B. Practical care of one another and fellowship
- C. The separation of church from world softens
- D. Integrity of life and mission
- E. Church discipline means more (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- F. Eating together means more
- G. This is probably the best place for leaders to emerge ...
- H. What we can do better in highly localized settings: welcome one another - Romans 15:7; instruct (counsel) one another - Romans 15:14; serve one another - Galatians 5:13; bear with one another - Ephesians 4:2; encourage one another - 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; consider how to stir up one another to love and good works - Hebrews 10:24; confess sins to one another - James 5:16; pray for one another - James 5:16
- I. Highly localized ministry and the spread of the gospel
- J. Highly localized ministry and the healing of the world we live in

V. Some steps we can take ...

- A. Eat together, work together
- B. Cultivate friendships with church members who live closer to you
- C. When this church moves toward localized ministry, participate
- D. Practice open spiritual conversation

VI. Why should it be this way? Jesus' won a kingdom through the cross.

- A. We want both Isaiah 53 and Revelation 1
- B. It all belongs to him, and he should be worshiped everywhere