



June 21, 2026

## A Pattern to Follow!

Romans 16:21-24

William Carey and Andrew Fuller, John Wesley and George Whitefield, Jim Elliott, Ed McCauley and Nate Saint, John Newton and William Cowper. Christian history reminds us that many of those God used in great ways were strengthened and sustained by deep, iron-sharpening-iron friendships. Those friendships were a source of encouragement, mutual support, accountability, and strength. From Romans 16:21-24, we learn...

*Paul cultivated Christ saturated friendships and partnerships that were a source of encouragement, mutual support, accountability, and strength.*

Behind every great servant of God stands a network of faithful friends who encourage, support, strengthen, and labor alongside them. Romans 16 reminds us that Christianity is not a solo endeavor. Even the apostle Paul, the greatest missionary in church history, did not minister alone. He cultivated Christ-saturated friendships and partnerships that strengthened his life and ministry.

**Key thought:** You must cultivate Christ saturated friendships and partnerships.

**Notice the pattern. You need Christ saturated relationships...**

### 1. That last! (verse 21a)

"Timothy my fellow worker greets you..."

### 2. That share ministry and purpose (verses 21b-22)

"...Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen."

"I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord."



### 3. That are found in the local church (verse 23)

“Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.”

### 4. That are an expression of the gospel (verses 21-23)

One remarkable feature of this passage is the diversity of the people listed. There are:

- Jews and Gentiles
- Rich and poor
- Public officials and ordinary believers
- Leaders and servants

The gospel brought them together. The world divides people by race, status, wealth, education, and politics. The gospel creates a new family united in Christ. Notice how frequently Paul speaks of believers as brothers, fellow workers, and partners. These relationships were living demonstrations of the reconciling power of the gospel.

## Conclusion

I am reminded in these verses, Paul seldom ministered alone. He was nearly always accompanied by a group of men: Consider the memorable language of Ecclesiastes 4:9–12:

<sup>9</sup> Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. <sup>10</sup> For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. <sup>11</sup> Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? <sup>12</sup> And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

It’s encouraging to have others with you on the journey of the Christian life. When you are doing something alone it is easy to get discouraged and give up. Alex Diprima wrote an article entitled “A Brief History of How Friendships Like Yours Can Change the World.” In the article he said,

*What if more Christians began to view their friendships as stewardships from God? We should all actively look for opportunities to leverage our friendships for practical, kingdom-minded endeavors.*

*Take stock of your closest friendships. Who has God placed in your life? Are there other Christians in your orbit with whom you share substantial like-mindedness and mutual affection? Now ask the questions:*



*What holy burdens do you share? What ministries are you both passionate about? What needs keep you up at night? What gifts has God given you and your friends? Do they complement one another? What might God be pleased to do within the circle of your own friendships?*

**Questions to ask:**

- Am I being too passive in cultivating meaningful Christian friendships?
- Am I making myself available for godly friendship?
- Who am I intentionally encouraging in the faith?
- Who walks alongside me in ministry and accountability?
- How can I use my friendships for kingdom purposes?
- Are my closest relationships helping me follow Christ more faithfully?

The Christian life was never intended to be lived alone. Like Paul, we need Christ-saturated friendships and partnerships that encourage us, strengthen us, and help us persevere until the end.