



CO-WORKERS IN CHRIST

*Faithful Women
in the New Testament*

Co-Workers in Christ: Faithful Women in the New Testament

PRIMARY AIM

To affirm the role and example of women in the mission of the church

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As our church moves into its second term, we move from highlighting the core practices of Prayer and Generosity to now focus on the practices of Witness and Community. During this term our church notably will be involved in Alpha Course and the Hope Food Drive, both significant ministries that outreach and witness Jesus to others. We will have two teaching series'. The first, Coworkers in Christ, will focus on five faithful women in the New Testament, to encourage both men and women within the Body of Christ. The second will cover chapters 11-15 in the Book of Acts to encourage us to be witnesses to the community around us. Through these two series' it is our hope to encourage us in our practices of Witness and Community.

This Co-Workers in Christ series will take a biographical approach. Each sermon will briefly place the passage in its biblical context and offer a clear exposition, but the main focus will be the person within the text. We will consider what Scripture reveals about their life, character, and service, and reflect on what their example might teach us as we grow in our own discipleship. The aim is to highlight the ways their faith and actions display godly character, and to trace how God was at work in and through their lives.

OUTLINE OF SERIES

	Date	Title	Reading
1	12 Apr	Mary Magdalene: Witness to the Resurrection	John 20:1-18
2	19 Apr	Phoebe: Servant Leader	Romans 16:1-16
	26 Apr	Mission Sunday	
3	03 May	Lydia: Gospel Hospitality	Acts 16:11-40
4	10 May	Priscilla: Teaching with Grace	Acts 18:18-28
5	17 May	Mary of Bethany: Faith in Action	Luke 10:38-42

Mary Magdalene

1

Witness to the Resurrection (John 20:1-18)

1. Do you enjoy reading biographies of people? What are the benefits of reading about someone's story?

2. Read the following passages, noticing Mary Magdalene's actions and thinking about her character:

a. Luke 8:1-3

b. John 19:25-27

c. Mark 16:1-3

3. How was Mary changed after her initial encounter with Jesus?

4. Give a brief description in your own words, of Mary Magdalene, based on these passages.

5. Think about your own life. How has your life changed since you encountered Jesus?

7. Read John 20:1-18.

8. In John 20:1-10, the disciples saw the empty tomb, and left. Mary saw the empty tomb and wanted to find Jesus body. Discuss possible reasons why their actions differed.

9. In John 20:11-18, Jesus chose to reveal himself alive from the dead to Mary in particular. What do we learn from this account about Jesus and about Mary?

10. As you have thought about Mary Magdalene, what is something you admire or a particular aspect of her response to Jesus that you can grow in?

11. Pray for each other.

Phoebe

2

Servant Leader (Romans 16:1-16)

1. When was the last time you wrote a letter? Do you like writing letters? Why or why not?

2. Read Romans 1:1-16.

3. Paul sends his greetings to many people in this section, which is longer than other letters of Paul. Which individual would you most like to take out and have a coffee with? Why?

4. Looking over the greetings, what kinds of character traits are highlighted by Paul?

5. How might Paul's greetings in Romans 16:1-16 serve to develop his thinking in his letter? (For example, do the greetings connect with any of the themes covered in ch. 12?)

6. Why does Paul commend Phoebe?

**7. What does Paul ask the Roman church to do in verses 1-2?
Why might this be important?**

**8. What does Paul say about Andronicus and Junia in verse 3?
What is the significance of a woman being named as an apostle
for ministry today?**

**9. Which fellow workers in Christ might you individually or as a
group consider expressing your appreciation to?**

**10. Hypothetically, if Paul was to include your name in his list
of gospel workers, what would you want to be remembered or
commended for?**

11. Pray for each other.

Lydia

3

Gospel Hospitality (Acts 16:11-40)

1. What is the best hospitality you have been shown?

2. Read Acts 16 11-40. Let's build a picture of Lydia. She was "A dealer in purple cloth". What was purple cloth, and its significance?

3. "From the city of Thyatira". Where is that? How far from Philippi? Is she an immigrant?

4. "Who was a worshipper of God". How might Lydia come to worship God?

5. Lydia had a "household", presumably servants and/or slaves. What does this tell us about her?

6. In Acts 16:14, how does this verse shape our understanding of a salvation response to the Gospel?

7. Read verse 15. What was Lydia's immediate response after accepting Christ?

8. What can you recall about your immediate response when you believed the gospel?

9. Do you think Paul was initially reluctant to stay at Lydia's house?

10. How do you think Lydia was viewed by the people of Thyatira after Paul's arrest and beating?

11. In verses 16-24, what was the trigger that sparked opposition to Paul and his message?

12. Paul and the others reacted to their circumstances with singing (v.25). How might you have reacted in a similar situation?

13. What is the importance of hospitality in how we practice gospel ministry and life?

14. What steps can we take to grow in our practice of hospitality?

15. Pray for each other.

Priscilla

4

Teaching with Grace (18:18-28)

- 1. What is one thing you most enjoy and least enjoy about overseas trips (or travelling in general)?**

- 2. Priscilla and Aquila ministered in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4; 1 Cor 16:19-20), Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19), and Rome (Rom 16:3-5). Read out each of the above references and list out what we know about Priscilla and Aquila.**

- 3. Now read Acts 18:18-28.**

- 4. What is the broad context of this passage and what do we know about the purpose of Paul, Priscilla and Aquila's journey (v.19, 23)?**

- 5. In what ways did Priscilla and Aquila minister to Apollos (v.24-28)? What did Apollos do more effectively after the time they spent with him?**

6. Why do you think this interaction between Apollos and Priscilla and Aquila is included in the Acts account?

7. What is so valuable about Apollos' ability to debate with his opponents in public debate?

8. Do you feel you are able to give good reasons why you follow Jesus to your friends and family? Why or why not?

9. Thinking about your own Christian faith. What areas would you like to learn or grow in the most? How might you achieve learning in these areas?

10. As you think about the life and ministry of Priscilla and Aquila, what do you admire most about them?

11. Spend some time praying for missionaries you know.

12. Pray for each other.

Mary of Bethany

5

Faith in Action (Luke 10:38-42)

1. Think back on this past week. Share an example where you had conflicting priorities. What did you choose and why?

2. Do you think it was societal norms or religious beliefs that promoted Martha to ask Jesus to change Mary's priorities?

3. Now let's use our imagination. Suppose Jesus had told Mary to help Martha. What would the church have taught about the role of women if that were the case?

4. How do you spend time learning from Jesus?

5. Read John 11:1-7, 11-20. Describe Mary's reaction to Jesus coming to Bethany. Was Mary upset because Lazarus had died or because Jesus did not come when they asked?

6. Was Mary's reaction justified? Have you ever been upset or angry because your prayers haven't been answered?

7. Read John 11:21-27. What did Martha know and believe? How did she learn this?

8. Read John 11:38-44. Does learning always happen by listening? Describe a time when you learned by watching, or by doing?

9. What do you think the reactions of Mary and the others was to this event? Was Mary still upset and angry with Jesus? Describe the scene as you imagine it.

10. Read John 12:1-11. How did the family of Lazarus honour Jesus?

11. How do we as a church and as individuals honour Jesus?

12. Reflect on the growth of Mary's relationship and understanding of who Jesus is. What were important steps for her?

13. Over the next week, reflect on how your understanding and relationship with Jesus has grown over the years.

14. Pray for each other.



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