

“Phoebe and Women in Ministry”

Romans 16:1-2

Sermon Discussion Questions | 3.19.17

1. Pastor Jim opened his message this week by explaining how he and the elders prayed about what to do with this portion of Romans due to its tricky interpretive question regarding women in ministry. Coming into the message and learning what the topic was, how did hearing how the elders and Jim approached the topic make you feel?
2. A big question that comes as we study scripture is how we interpret certain portions of it when there are various ways of possibly reading it. Take a moment and look at your own study of scripture, how do you usually handle tricky or complicated sections? What steps do you follow?
3. Have someone in the group read Romans 16:1-2. We all come from different backgrounds and traditions so there's a good chance this topic and these verses may impact our personal faith and understanding differently. How did you view this passage prior to today's sermon?
4. What we bring into a discussion about the meaning of scripture or the interpretation of it matters. Our background, tradition, family all comes to bear in it. Pastor Jim explained that what we are doing is asking the Holy Spirit to explain what He has written here. He then walked us through several steps used to make decisions about scripture like this: analyze the text; understand the strongest arguments against translating it as deacon; check what we see against what others have seen in same verses; and finally check what others outside our context, culture and time thought of it. Take a moment to reflect on what was shared this morning and share how each step we walked through made you feel. Did you agree, disagree? Did it make you feel more comfortable or did you struggle with the conclusions Pastor Jim reached? Why?
5. Whether you agree with using the word deacon or you still prefer servant, Paul calls us to three things: 1. Welcome women serving as equal members of the work God is doing; 2. To help women with the work God has called them to do; and 3. To honor them for their devotion and work for the kingdom. As men and women of Calvary, how do you feel you do at this? What are some opportunities you have right now to do these things?
6. Pastor Jim mentioned that Calvary Church doesn't currently have women deacons and that the elders are starting a process of prayerful consideration and conversation with God and the church about this issue. He also took time to highlight and honor several of the women in ministry at our church. To close today I would encourage you to take an extended time to pray. Pray for the elders and leadership of the church as they weigh in on this subject. Pray for wisdom, direction and discernment. Pray for humility and clarity. Take some time to also share some testimonies of how you have been blessed by the work of one of our women in ministry. Take some time to pray over them, their ministries, and their relationships. Pray blessings upon them and those they serve. Maybe have someone go online and look at the list of staff on Calvary's website. Pray over them by name, pray for their departments and volunteers.

Close group praying for each other and encouraging each other to take this message to heart.