

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 6

No 28

## Living and Serving in the Fellowship: Part 3

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-13

What does it mean for us in practical terms once we have presented our bodies to the Lord a living sacrifice for His service. What difference will it make to my life and what should I do about it? The six topics following Paul's appeal answer this question: 1. Living and Serving in the Fellowship. 2. Living for Christ in an Abrasive Society. 3. A Christian Response to a Secular Authority. 4. Love, Limits and Liberty. 5. Conscience Versus Love. 6. All One in Christ Jesus. These themes are our study guide. Some texts beg more careful consideration than others. This is the third study in the first part, a review of Paul's great appeal and integrated with it, Living the Life.

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honour; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practising hospitality.* Romans 12:9-13.

**Paul's Injunctions.** Paul gives a series of short cryptic statements which are such good common sense that we almost skip read them. However they are important. We recommend that we pause and meditate unhurriedly on each one. They are easy to read but challenging to do. Take care to build each of them into our lives. In this way we will grow toward maturity in Christ. They are so short the translators have added words to make them read easily. Today we view them more as Paul wrote them.

**v9 Let love be without hypocrisy.** It is literally, 'The un-hypocritical love', all in the nominative, like the title of a book. We like to add a verb 'let ... be' to make a sentence out of the phrase, a more complete statement. It appears to be a pointer back to what he has just told us in v7&8. Read these verses again and wrap each gift in genuine love. Hypocrisy is our pretending to or demanding that others do what is not true in us. Paul negates a negative, rather than asserting a positive, as some versions translate. It is not an

insignificant point. Be watching out least an non-genuine attribute creeps into our relationships with God and others and ruins all we seek to do. It is so easy to be untouched, mouthing meaningless platitudes, 'Bless you,' then turn away.

**Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.** Paul was even more terse. 'Abhor the evil; embrace the good.' Jesus taught: The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. Luke 6:45.

Evil. There are three words in the NT for evil. There is what is trivial but troublesome, worthless or contemptible. There is that which is evil in character, base, utterly corrupt and malignant. Evil in this verse is mid way. Vine says of it, "Evil that causes labour, pain, sorrow, (leading to) malignant evil."

Good in this form says Vine, "describes that which being good in its character ... is beneficial in its effect ... literally 'the good' as being morally honourable, pleasing to God and therefore beneficial. Christians are to prove it, Romans 12:2, cling to it, 12:9 and do it, 13:3 We are reminded of God's charge to the

Israelites:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live . . . Deuteronomy 30:19.

We also may choose that which brings blessing into our lives and that of our family associates, or pain and sorrow. See also Philippians 4:8&9.

**v10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.** The word 'devoted', or 'affectioned' has deeper meaning. It is a natural affection as one family member for another. Paul is saying, 'Love your brothers in Christ as brothers in your family.'

**Give preference to one another in honour** is more literally, 'valuing each other first.' It simply says, 'Each consider worthwhile placing others first.' This preference is something to be desired, not simply a courtesy. It places greater value on the other person, not on ones own social graces.

**v11 Not lagging behind in diligence.**

The old Bible says, 'Not slothful in business' This can be misleading, seeming to point to our vocation. It is rather, 'Never defer diligence.' Laziness, slowness or idleness is unacceptable in the affairs of the fellowship. The word is also found in Romans 12:8 speaking of the gift of leadership in the church. We are also reminded of:

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Ecclesiastes 9:10.

**Fervent in spirit.** Spirit is our spirit, the

part which animates us. We are told to boil with heat. Bubble over the spirit. An example of this is found in the life of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28.

**Serving the Lord;** to serve as a slave. It is the business of a slave to mind his Lord's business, diligently, actively.

**v12 Rejoicing in hope.** Joyfully secure as in Romans 15:13. This is deliberately coupled with:

**Persevering in tribulation.** Stand firm under the pressure. Pressure is compression, being squeezed. It can be whatever is troubling us. Undoubtedly Paul had in mind enemies of the Faith.

**Devoted to prayer.** Devoted means Attend constantly, an example is given in Acts 2:42, where the word is used. Prayer means 'the place of prayer'. It is an instruction to be found often in the place of prayer. As the context is life in the fellowship we may assume the prayer group, but private prayer is important also. Compare Hebrews 10:25. Tribulation is sandwiched between hope and prayer.

**v13 Contributing to the needs of the saints,** It means to share in common with all God's people.

**Practising hospitality** is not to one another, it is a ministry to outsiders. The instruction reads, 'Eagerly seek to be friendly to strangers.' and could be a special reference to the refugees of religious persecutions.

These qualities of living in and serving the fellowship are not tied to any particular gift, they are applicable to all. Consider, adopt, practice and refine them. Make them part of your life because this is the practical side of offering our body and the renewal of our mind.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NIV, unless otherwise acknowledged.

# Welcome

## Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

These notes may be reproduced in part or in full when distributed without cost, if the words 'Used by Permission, Glen Park Gospel Church.' is included