

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort”:** (10 min.)
 Ro 15:4—Read God’s Word for comfort (w17.07 14 ¶11)
 Ro 15:5—Petition Jehovah to supply you with “endurance and comfort” (w16.04 14 ¶15)
 Ro 15:13—Jehovah gives us hope (w14 6/15 14 ¶11)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ro 15:27—How were Gentile Christians “debtors” to the Christians in Jerusalem? (w89 12/1 24 ¶3)

Ro 16:25—What is “the sacred secret that has been kept in silence for long-lasting times”? (it-1 858 ¶15)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ro 15:1-16 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (10)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (11)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 129
- **How Jehovah “Supplies Endurance and Comfort”:** (15 min.) Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then discuss the following questions:
 What lessons did you learn about receiving comfort?

What lessons did you learn about giving comfort?

- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 58
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 34 and Prayer

ROMANS 15-16 | Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort

15:4-7 

One way that Jehovah comforts us and helps us to endure is through his Word. How do these Bible examples comfort and encourage you?



• Noah



• Joseph



• David

33 *Throw Your Burden on Jehovah*

(Psalm 55)

1. "Listen to my prayer," Jehovah.
Let yourself be found by me.
Feel the anguish deep inside me;
Help me unafraid to be.

(CHORUS)

*Throw your burden on Jehovah;
Trust in him to sustain and save you.
He will always give protection.
He is loyal; he is true.*

2. Had I wings just as a dove has,
Far from danger I would fly,
Safe from those who seek to hurt me,
Sheltered from their hateful cry.

(Chorus)

3. Comfort from our God, Jehovah,
Always brings us peace of mind.
He will help us bear our burden.
He is loving; he is kind.

(Chorus)

Romans 15-16

15 We, though, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to be pleasing ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For even the Christ did not please himself, but just as it is written: "The reproaches of those reproaching you have fallen upon me." ⁴ For all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ Now may the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that unitedly you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ So welcome one another, just as the Christ also welcomed you, with glory to God in view. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a minister of those who are circumcised in behalf of God's truthfulness, so as to verify the promises He made to their forefathers, ⁹ and that the nations might glorify God for his mercy. Just as it is written: "That is why I will openly acknowledge you among the nations, and to your name I will sing praises." ¹⁰ And again he says: "Be glad, you nations, with his people." ¹¹ And again: "Praise Jehovah, all you nations, and let all the peoples praise him." ¹² And again Isaiah says: "There will be the root of Jes'se, the one arising to rule nations; on him nations will rest their hope." ¹³ May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him, so that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit.

¹⁴ Now I myself am convinced about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and that you are able to admonish one another. ¹⁵ However, I have written to you more outspokenly on some points, so as to give you

another reminder, because of the undeserved kindness given to me from God ¹⁶ for me to be a public servant of Christ Jesus to the nations. I am engaging in the holy work of the good news of God, so that these nations might be an acceptable offering, sanctified with holy spirit.

¹⁷ So I have reason to exult in Christ Jesus over the things pertaining to God. ¹⁸ For I will not presume to speak about anything except what Christ has done through me in order for the nations to be obedient, by my word and deed, ¹⁹ with the power of signs and wonders, with the power of God's spirit, so that from Jerusalem and in a circuit as far as Il-lyr'i-cum I have thoroughly preached the good news about the Christ. ²⁰ In this way, indeed, I made it my aim not to declare the good news where the name of Christ had already been made known, so as not to build on another man's foundation; ²¹ but just as it is written: "Those who received no report about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

²² This is also why I was many times hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now I no longer have untouched territory in these regions, and for many years I have longed to come to you.

²⁴ Therefore, when I journey to Spain, I hope that I will see you and be accompanied partway there by you after I have first enjoyed your company for a time. ²⁵ But now I am about to travel to Jerusalem to minister to the holy ones. ²⁶ For those in Mac-e-do'ni-a and A-cha'ia have been pleased to share their things by a contribution to the poor among the holy ones in Jerusalem.

²⁷ True, they have been pleased to do so, and indeed they were debtors to them; for if the nations have shared in their spiritual things, they also owe it to minister to them with their material things.

²⁸ So after I have finished with this and have delivered this contribution securely to them, I will depart by way of you for Spain.

²⁹ Moreover, I know that when I do come to you, I will come with a full measure of blessing from Christ.

³⁰ Now I urge you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the spirit, that you exert yourselves with me in prayers to God for me, ³¹ that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Ju-de'a and that my ministry in behalf of Jerusalem may prove to be acceptable to the holy ones, ³² so that by God's will I will come to you with joy and be refreshed together with you. ³³ May the God who gives peace be with all of you. Amen.

16 I am introducing to you Phoe'be, our sister, who is a minister of the congregation that is in Cen'chre-ae, ² so that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the holy ones and give her whatever help she may need, for she herself also proved to be a defender of many, including me.

³ Give my greetings to Pris'ca and Aq'ui-la, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who have risked their own necks for me and to whom not only I but also all the congregations of the nations give thanks. ⁵ Also greet the congregation that is in their house. Greet my beloved E-pae'ne-tus, who is a firstfruits of Asia for Christ. ⁶ Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. ⁷ Greet An-dron'i-cus and Ju'ni-as, my relatives and fellow prisoners, who are men well-known to the apostles and who have been in union with Christ longer than I have.

⁸ Give my greetings to Am-pli-a'tus, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Ur-ba'nus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Sta'chys. ¹⁰ Greet A-pel'les, the approved one in Christ. Greet those from the household of A-ris-tob'u-lus. ¹¹ Greet He-ro'di-on, my relative. Greet those from the household of Nar-cis'sus who are in the Lord. ¹² Greet Try-phae'na and Try-pho'sa, women who are working hard in the Lord. Greet Per'sis, our beloved one, for she has worked hard in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Ru'fus, the chosen one in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Greet A-syn'cri-tus, Phle'gon, Her'mes, Pat'ro-bas, Her'mas, and the brothers with them. ¹⁵ Greet Phi-lol'o-gus and Julia, Ne'reus and his sister, and O-lym'pas, and

all the holy ones with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the congregations of the Christ greet you.

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who create divisions and causes for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For men of that sort are slaves, not of our Lord Christ, but of their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattering speech they seduce the hearts of unsuspecting ones. ¹⁹ Your obedience has come to the notice of all, and so I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise as to what is good, but innocent as to what is evil. ²⁰ For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, and so do Lucius, Ja'son, and So-sip'a-ter, my relatives.

²² I, Ter'tius, who have done the writing of this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³ Ga'ius, host to me and to all the congregation, greets you. E-ras'tus, the city treasurer, greets you, and so does Quar'tus, his brother. ²⁴ _____

²⁵ Now to Him who can make you firm according to the good news I declare and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the sacred secret that has been kept in silence for long-lasting times ²⁶ but has now been made manifest and has been made known through the prophetic Scriptures among all the nations according to the command of the everlasting God to promote obedience by faith; ²⁷ to God, who alone is wise, be the glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

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ROMANS 15-16 | Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort

15:4-7 

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• Noah



• Joseph



• David

March 11-17 / Romans 15-16

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God's Word

Romans 15:4—Read God's Word for comfort

Romans 15:4: For all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.

w17.07 14 paragraph 11

The account about Jesus' intense grief at the time of Lazarus' death is just one of countless consoling scriptures found in God's comforting Word. And no wonder, "for all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) If you are grieving, you too can find soothing comfort from such scriptures as the following:

"Jehovah is close to the brokenhearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit."—Psalm 34:18, 19.

"When anxieties overwhelmed me, you [Jehovah] comforted and soothed me."—Psalm 94:19.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and gave everlasting comfort and good hope by means of undeserved kindness, comfort your hearts and make you firm."—2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17. *

* Other scriptures that many have found comforting are Psalm 20:1, 2; 31:7; 38:8, 9, 15; 55:22; 121:1, 2; Isaiah 57:15; 66:13; Philippians 4:13; and 1 Peter 5:7.

Romans 15:5—Petition Jehovah to supply you with “endurance and comfort”

Romans 15:5: Now may the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had,

w16.04 14 paragraph 5

Turn to Jehovah for strength. Jehovah is “the God who supplies endurance and comfort.” (Romans 15:5) He alone fully understands not only the problems we face but also the way our environment, emotions, and even our genetic makeup affect us. He is thus the best one to equip us to endure. “He satisfies the desire of those who fear him,” the Bible says. “He hears their cry for help, and he rescues them.” (Psalm 145:19) How, though, will God answer our prayers for strength to endure?

Romans 15:13—Jehovah gives us hope

Romans 15:13: May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him, so that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit.

w14 6/15 14 paragraph 11

Jehovah ‘gives hope that fills us with joy and peace.’ (Romans 15:13) God-given hope enables us to endure tests of faith. Anointed ones who prove ‘faithful even to death will be given the crown of heavenly life.’ (Revelation 2:10) Integrity-keepers with an earthly hope will enjoy eternal blessings in the promised global Paradise. (Luke 23:43) What is our natural response to such prospects? Are we not filled with joy and peace, as well as love for the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present”?—James 1:17.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Romans 15:27—How were Gentile Christians “debtors” to the Christians in Jerusalem?

Romans 15:27: True, they have been pleased to do so, and indeed they were debtors to them; for if the nations have shared in their spiritual things, they also owe it to minister to them with their material things.

w89 12/1 24 paragraph 3

Certainly, their Gentile brothers should have been moved to respond to their plight. After all, they owed a special “debt” to the Christians in Jerusalem. Was it not from Jerusalem that the good news had spread to the Gentiles? Paul reckoned: “If the Jewish Christians shared their spiritual treasures with the Gentiles, the Gentiles have a clear duty to contribute to their material needs.”—Romans 15:27, *The New English Bible*.

Romans 16:25—What is “the sacred secret that has been kept in silence for long-lasting times”?

Romans 16:25: Now to Him who can make you firm according to the good news I declare and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the sacred secret that has been kept in silence for long-lasting times

it-1 858 paragraph 5

The Messiah, or Christ, was to be the promised Seed through whom all righteous persons of all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Galatians 3:8, 14) The first mention of such “seed” came after the rebellion in Eden had already been initiated, but prior to the birth of Abel. (Genesis 3:15) This was some 4,000 years before

the revelation of “the sacred secret” was made by the clear identification of that Messianic “seed.” Hence, it was, indeed, “kept in silence for long-lasting times.”—Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 1:8-10; 3:4-11.

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

Bible Reading: (4 minutes or less) Romans 15:1-16 (*th* study 10)

ROMANS

Study Notes—Chapter 15

15:6

unitedly . . . with one voice: Lit., “like-mindedly [of one mind] . . . with one mouth.” Just as Jesus prayed for his followers to be united, Paul prayed for his fellow believers to be united in thought and action. (Joh 17:20-23; see study note on Joh 17:23.) In this verse, Paul uses two terms to emphasize this unity. The word rendered “unitedly” is used several times in the book of Acts to describe the remarkable unity among early Christians. (Ac 1:14, “with one purpose”; 2:46, “with a united purpose”; 4:24, “with one accord”; 15:25, “unanimous”) The expression rendered “one voice” shows Paul’s desire that the Jewish and Gentile Christians in the Rome congregation join their voices to glorify God harmoniously.

15:7

welcome: Or “accept; receive.” The Greek word used here conveys the idea of receiving someone kindly or hospitably, such as into one’s home or circle of friends. The same word can be rendered “receive . . . kindly” (Phm 17; Ac 28:2) or “took . . . into their company” (Ac 18:26).

15:8

a minister: Or “a servant.” In the Bible, the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* is often used to refer to those who humbly render service in behalf of others. (See study note on Mt 20:26.) Here the term is used to describe Christ. In his prehuman existence, Jesus served Jehovah for untold ages. However, at his baptism, he entered a new ministry, which involved filling the spiritual needs of sinful humans. It even included giving his life as a ransom. (Mt 20:28; Lu 4:16-21) Jesus is here described as a minister to the circumcised Jews **in behalf of God’s**

truthfulness because his ministry involved fulfilling the promises God had made to the Jewish forefathers. This included the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed by means of his offspring. (Ge 22:17, 18) Therefore, Jesus' ministry would also benefit people of the nations who would "rest their hope" on him.—Ro 15:9-12.

15:9

Just as it is written: In this context (Ro 15:9-12), Paul quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures four times, showing that Jehovah had long foretold that people of all nations would praise Him. Therefore, along with the Jews, Gentiles benefit from Christ's ministry. This reasoning supports Paul's admonition to the international congregation of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome to "welcome one another."—Ro 15:7; see study note on Ro 1:17.

among the nations: Paul is apparently partially quoting Ps 18:49, where the Hebrew text reads: "I will glorify you among the nations, O Jehovah." (2Sa 22:50 reads similarly.) The main text reading of Ro 15:9 has strong manuscript support, but a few manuscripts read "among the nations, O Lord." According to existing copies of the *Septuagint*, some later copyists apparently expanded the quotation at Ro 15:9 to include the complete text as it appears at Ps 18:49 (17:50, *LXX*) and 2Sa 22:50.

15:11

Jehovah: In this quote from Ps 117:1, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. A5 and C.

15:12

the root of Jesse: Paul uses this quote about "nations" who would "rest their hope" on "the root of Jesse" to show that people of the nations would have a place in the Christian congregation.

Jesse was the father of David. (Ru 4:17, 22; 1Sa 16:5-13) The apostle Paul here quotes from the *Septuagint* rendering of Isa 11:10, where it was foretold that the coming Messiah would be called “the root of Jesse.” (Compare Re 5:5, where Jesus is called “the root of David”; see also Re 22:16.) A root of a tree or of a plant normally comes before the trunk or the branches. So it might seem more logical that Jesse (or his son David) would be spoken of as the root from which Jesus would eventually come, since the Messiah was a descendant, not an ancestor, of Jesse (or David). (Mt 1:1, 6, 16) However, there are other Bible passages that support the idea that Jesus is the root of Jesse. Since Jesus is immortal, it is by means of him that Jesse’s genealogical line stays alive. (Ro 6:9) Jesus has been empowered as Judge and heavenly King, which bears on his relationship even with his ancestors. (Lu 1:32, 33; 19:12, 15; 1Co 15:25) David prophetically called Jesus his Lord. (Ps 110:1; Ac 2:34-36) Finally, during the coming Millennium, the life-giving benefits of Jesus’ ransom will extend also to Jesse, whose life on earth then will depend on Jesus. At that time, Jesus will serve as “Eternal Father” to Jesse and David.—Isa 9:6.

15:16

a public servant: The Greek word *lei-tour-gos'* is derived from the words *la-os'*, “people,” and *er'gon*, “work.” The word was originally used by the ancient Greeks to refer to work done under the civil authorities, usually at personal expense, for the benefit of the people. There was a similar arrangement under the Romans. As used in the Bible, the term usually refers to one who is serving in sacred office. The term is frequently used in the *Septuagint* to refer to “duties” (Nu 7:5) and “service” (Nu 4:28; 1Ch 6:32 [6:17, *LXX*]) carried out by the priests at the tabernacle and at Jehovah’s temple in Jerusalem. Here Paul uses the term with regard to himself, “an apostle to the [Gentile] nations” who proclaimed the good news of God. (Ro 11:13) This preaching

would be of great benefit to the public, particularly to people of the nations.

engaging in the holy work: The Greek verb *hi·e·rou·ge'o* occurs only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures and denotes being involved in a sacred work or duty. “The holy work” that Paul engaged in was in connection with proclaiming **the good news of God**, the Christian message to people of all nations. (See study notes on Ro 1:1; 1:9.) By using this term, Paul showed that he appreciated the sacred and serious nature of that work. The expression Paul uses is related to the verb rendered “serving as priest” (*hi·e·ra·teu'o*) at Lu 1:8 and to the term for “temple” (*hi·e·ron'*) used at Mt 4:5 and in many other verses. Perhaps because of this connection, Paul alludes to the sacrifices offered by priests at the temple when he compares those nations who accepted the message to an **offering** made to God. That offering was approved by God and blessed with his spirit.—Ro 1:1, 16.

15:19

wonders: Or “portents.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *te'ras* is consistently used in combination with *se·mei'on* (“sign”), both terms being used in the plural form. (Mt 24:24; Joh 4:48; Ac 7:36; 14:3; 15:12; 2Co 12:12) Basically, *te'ras* refers to anything that causes awe or wonderment. When the term clearly refers to something portending what will happen in the future, the alternate rendering “portent” is used in a study note.

God's spirit: Some ancient manuscripts read “holy spirit” or simply “the spirit,” but the main text reading chosen here has strong manuscript support.

in a circuit as far as Illyricum: Illyricum was a Roman province and region named for the Illyrian tribes living there. It was located in the NW part of the Balkan Peninsula along the coast of the Adriatic Sea. (See App. B13.) The borders and divisions of the

province varied greatly throughout the Roman rule. It is uncertain whether the original Greek term rendered “as far as” means that Paul actually preached in Illyricum or merely up to it.

15:23

untouched territory: Paul was intensely interested in expanding the evangelizing work. He greatly desired to preach in areas where the good news had not yet reached. (Compare 2Co 10:15, 16.) In the following verse, Paul expresses his intention to extend his missionary work *W*, toward Spain. Paul wrote these words near the end of his third missionary tour, at the beginning of 56 C.E.

15:24

Spain: Paul mentions Spain twice in his letter to the Romans, here and at Ro 15:28. Whether Paul ever reached Spain is not certain. However, Clement of Rome stated (c. 95 C.E.) that Paul came “to the extreme limit of the *W*[est],” which may have included Spain. If Paul reached Spain, his visit probably occurred between his release from his first imprisonment in Rome (c. 61 C.E.) and his second imprisonment there (c. 65 C.E.) At that time, Spain was under Roman rule. In this land that Paul apparently viewed as “untouched territory,” Latin was more widely spoken than Greek.—Ro 15:23.

15:26

Macedonia: A region north of Greece that gained prominence under Alexander the Great and remained independent until conquered by the Romans. Macedonia was a Roman province when the apostle Paul made his first visit to Europe. Paul visited the area three times. (Ac 16:9)—See App. B13.

Achaia: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, Achaia refers to the Roman province of southern Greece with its capital at Corinth. In 27 B.C.E., when Caesar Augustus reorganized the two provinces

of Greece, Macedonia and Achaia, the name Achaia applied to all of Peloponnese and to part of continental Greece. The province of Achaia was under the administration of the Roman Senate and was ruled through a proconsul from its capital, Corinth. (2Co 1:1) Other cities of the province of Achaia mentioned in the Christian Greek Scriptures were Athens and Cenchreae. (Ac 18:1, 18; Ro 16:1) Achaia and Macedonia, its neighboring province to the N, were often mentioned together.—Ac 19:21; Ro 15:26; 1Th 1:7, 8; see App. B13.

15:27

they were debtors: Or “they were indebted; they owed it; they were under obligation.” In the Scriptures, the Greek word for “debtor” and other terms related to being in debt refer not only to financial debts but also to obligations or duties in general. (See study note on Ro 1:14.) Paul’s point here is that Gentile believers were in debt to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem because of having benefited from them spiritually. Therefore, it was only proper that they assist their poor Jewish brothers materially.—Ro 15:26.

15:28

contribution: Lit., “fruit.” Here the word “fruit” is used in the sense of “result; outcome; product” and apparently refers to the money that had been collected for the brothers in Jerusalem.

15:31

my ministry: The Greek word *di·a·ko·ni'a*, often rendered “ministry,” is here used in the sense of “relief work (or, ministry),” as at Ac 11:29; 12:25; 2Co 8:4; 9:13. The congregations in Macedonia and Achaia had shared in a “relief ministry,” gathering together a contribution for Paul to take to the needy brothers in Judea. (2Co 8:1-4; 9:1, 2, 11-13) Instead of *di·a·ko·ni'a*, a few ancient manuscripts use the word *do·ro·pho·ri'a* (bringing of a gift) here. Some suggest that this was the result of a scribe’s

attempt to explain what kind of “ministry” Paul was referring to.— See study note on Ac 11:29.

ROMANS Study Notes—Chapter 16

16:1

I am introducing: Or “I recommend.” Paul is apparently introducing Phoebe to the Christians in Rome for the purpose of encouraging them to accept her and to adopt the same attitude toward her that Paul had. (Ro 16:2) The Greek word used here is related to the Greek term Paul used at 2Co 3:1 in the expression “letters of *recommendation*.” In Bible times, such letters of recommendation were a common way of introducing people to strangers. Phoebe, who served as a minister in the Cenchræe congregation, may have carried Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome.

a minister: Or “a servant.” The Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* is broad in meaning. When Paul called Phoebe “a minister of the congregation,” he apparently made reference to the Christian ministry, the spreading of the good news. Preaching the good news is a responsibility of all Christian ministers. (Compare Ac 2:17, 18 with study note on Ro 11:13.) The term is also used of women who ministered, or served, to provide food and other assistance to Jesus and his followers. (Lu 8:3) Since *di-a'ko-nos* is sometimes used in an official sense, referring to appointed “ministerial servants” in the Christian congregation (Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8, 12), some translators render it “deacon” or “deaconess” here at Ro 16:1. But when the Bible mentions the qualifications for “ministerial servants,” it does not indicate that such appointed servants could be women. Rather, they are described as “husbands of one wife.” (1Ti 3:8-13) Accordingly, many

translators understand the term as used here in a general sense and render it “servant” or “helper.”

Cenchreae: One of Corinth’s seaports about 11 km (7 mi) E of Corinth. After staying in Corinth for more than 18 months, Paul sailed from Cenchreae to Ephesus about 52 C.E. (See study note on Ac 18:18.) The Scriptures do not indicate when the Christian **congregation** was established at Cenchreae. Some suggest that the congregation was a fruitage of Paul’s long stay in Corinth, but it was definitely established before 56 C.E. when he wrote his letter to the Romans.

16:2

a defender: The Greek term *pro-sta'tis* used here has the basic sense of “one who protects.” That description implies that Phoebe performed kind deeds and came to the aid of those who were in need. It may also convey the idea that she actively gave support to others. Phoebe had the freedom to travel and to render service in the congregation, perhaps indicating that she was a widow and possibly a wealthy woman. If so, she may have been able to use her influence in the community to act in behalf of Christians who were falsely being accused of wrongdoing or to provide some form of refuge from danger for them.

16:3

Give my greetings: From this verse to verse 15, Paul sends greetings to 26 Christians mentioned by name and to many others mentioned individually or collectively. Paul’s appreciation for his spiritual sisters is shown by his specific mention of these eight Christian women: Prisca, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, and Julia as well as Rufus’ mother and Nereus’ sister. By this time, he had been a prominent apostle to the nations for many years. (Ac 9:15; Ro 1:1; 11:13) Yet, as indicated by these greetings, he never stopped showing personal interest in his fellow worshippers.

Prisca and Aquila: This faithful couple had been banished from Rome by Emperor Claudius' decree against the Jews sometime in the year 49 or early 50 C.E. Claudius died in 54 C.E., and by the time Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome, about 56 C.E., Prisca and Aquila had returned there. (See study note on Ac 18:2.) Paul describes them as his **fellow workers**. The Greek word for "fellow worker," *sy-ner-gos'*, appears 12 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures, most often in the letters of Paul. (Ro 16:9, 21; Php 2:25; 4:3; Col 4:11; Phm 1, 24) Notably, at 1Co 3:9, Paul says: "We are God's fellow workers."

16:4

risked their own necks: Some suggest that this expression, literally meaning "placed their neck under," is a figure of speech derived from the practice of beheading, which was used in Roman times. It was a strong expression referring to imminent and violent death. Paul indicates that Aquila and Prisca (Priscilla) had put their lives in jeopardy in order to save him. Some have suggested that this occurred during the uproar of the silversmiths in Ephesus. (Ac 19:28-31) It may have been in such a perilous circumstance that Paul felt so uncertain even of his own life that Aquila and Prisca intervened and risked their lives for him. (2Co 1:8) However, the Bible does not specify the occasion that Paul had in mind here.

me: Or "my life (soul)." Here the Greek word *psy-khe'* refers to a person or to a person's life.—See Glossary, "Soul."

16:6

Mary: Six women in the Christian Greek Scriptures are named Mary. This Mary is mentioned only here, where Paul commends her for having **worked hard** in behalf of the Christian congregation in Rome. The Bible provides no additional information about her.—See study note on Lu 1:27.

16:16

with a holy kiss: In four of his letters (here and at 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26), Paul encourages his fellow Christians to greet one another “with a holy kiss.” The apostle Peter used a similar expression: “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” (1Pe 5:14) In Bible times, people would give a kiss as a token of affection, respect, or peace. It was also common to kiss when greeting someone or saying goodbye. (Ru 1:14; Lu 7:45) This practice was customary between male and female relatives (Ge 29:11; 31:28), between male relatives, and between close friends (Ge 27:26, 27; 45:15; Ex 18:7; 1Sa 20:41, 42; 2Sa 14:33; 19:39; see study note on Ac 20:37). Among Christians, such expressions of affection reflected the brotherhood and spiritual oneness of those united by true worship. They were not given as a mere formalism or ritual nor with any romantic or erotic overtones.—Joh 13:34, 35.

16:18

appetites: Or “bellies.” In a literal sense, the Greek word *koi-li'a* refers to a person’s “stomach” or inward parts. Here and at Php 3:19, it is used figuratively to denote fleshly appetite, or desire. Paul explains that if individuals become slaves of their “own appetites,” they cannot be slaves “of our Lord Christ.” Php 3:19 describes people who have “their belly,” that is, their fleshly desires, as their god.

16:20

will crush Satan: These words echo the first Bible prophecy, recorded at Ge 3:15, which says that the “offspring” of the figurative woman mentioned there would “crush [the serpent’s] head.” This refers to the destruction of Satan, “the original serpent.” (Re 12:9) To describe that event, Paul used a Greek word that lexicons define “to shatter; to break in pieces by crushing; to overcome completely.” The same Greek word is

used at Re 2:27 to describe that the nations “will *be broken to pieces* like clay vessels.” Writing to fellow Christians who were “joint heirs with Christ” (Ro 8:17), Paul used the expression **under your feet** figuratively to denote that they would share in the crushing of Satan.—Compare Mal 4:3.

16:22

Tertius: The writer or transcriber of Paul’s letter to the Romans and the only one of Paul’s secretaries identified by name. The wording **in the Lord** indicates that Tertius was a faithful Christian who may have been a member of the congregation in Corinth. Tertius inserts his own greetings to the Romans, perhaps because he knew many Christians in Rome.

16:23

host to me: That is, to Paul. The personal greetings from Tertius are limited to the preceding verse.

the city treasurer: Or “the city steward.” The Greek word *oi-ko-no'mos*, most often rendered “steward,” has the basic meaning of “a manager (administrator) of a house.” In this context, when used together with the Greek word for “city,” it apparently refers to one who was responsible for the financial affairs of the city of Corinth. Archaeological excavations in Corinth in the 1920’s unearthed a pavement or paving block with an inscription saying that a certain Erastus laid a pavement at his own expense. Whether the Erastus mentioned in this inscription is the same as the one Paul mentions here is uncertain, but the pavement is believed to have existed in the first century C.E.

his brother: The Greek text literally reads “the brother” and could be understood in the sense of Quartus being a fleshly brother of Erastus. However, it is also possible to understand the text as referring to a spiritual relationship and thus translate it “our brother.”

16:24

Some Greek manuscripts and ancient translations into other languages add: “May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.” Other manuscripts include these words after verse 27. However, in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts, a similar phrase appears only in verse 20. It does not appear as verse 24, nor is it found after verse 27. This manuscript evidence strongly indicates that such additions are not part of the original text.—See App. A3.

16:25

revelation: Lit., “uncovering; disclosure.” The Greek term *a·po·ka'ly·psis* is often used, as in this verse, regarding the revealing of God’s will and purposes or of other spiritual matters. (Eph 3:3; Re 1:1) God is the ultimate Source of such revelations.—Compare study note on Lu 2:32.

16:27

Amen: Or “So be it.” The Greek word *a·men'* is a transliteration of a Hebrew term derived from the root word *'a·man'*, meaning “to be faithful, to be trustworthy.” (See Glossary.) “Amen” was said in agreement to an oath, a prayer, or a statement. Writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures often used it to express agreement with some form of praise to God, as Paul does here. (Ro 16:27; Eph 3:21; 1Pe 4:11) In other cases, it is used to emphasize the writer’s wish that God extend favor toward the recipients of the letter. (Ro 15:33; Heb 13:20, 21) It is also used to indicate that the writer earnestly agrees with what is expressed.—Re 1:7; 22:20.



Paul's Journeys After c. 61 C.E.

The book of Acts records many of Paul's earlier travels, including three missionary tours and his journey to Rome from Caesarea. However, Paul's letters provide clues about his travels after his first imprisonment in Rome (that is, after c. 61 C.E.), information not recorded in Acts. For example, Paul wrote about his plans to "journey to Spain," though it is not clear whether he was able to fulfill this desire before his second imprisonment (c. 65 C.E.). (Ro 15:24) During his first confinement in Rome, Paul wrote that he wanted to return to Philippi and also to visit Colossae. (Php 2:24; Phm 22; compare Col 4:9.) In letters to Titus and to Timothy, written after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, Paul provides other details about his travels. He could have been in Ephesus with Timothy during this period. (1Ti 1:3) Tit 3:12 shows that Paul decided to spend the winter in Nicopolis. This map shows some of the locations that Paul may have visited.

1. **Spain**—Ro 15:24 (after c. 61 C.E.)
2. **Crete**—Tit 1:5 (c. 61-64 C.E.)
3. **Miletus**—2Ti 4:20 (before c. 65 C.E.)
4. **Colossae**—Phm 22 (Compare Col 4:9 with Phm 10-12.) (after 61 C.E.)
5. **Ephesus**—1Ti 1:3 (c. 61-64 C.E.)
6. **Troas**—2Ti 4:13 (before c. 65 C.E.)
7. **Philippi**—Php 2:24 (after 61 C.E.)
8. **Macedonia**—1Ti 1:3 (c. 61-64 C.E.)
9. **Nicopolis**—Tit 3:12 (Paul was possibly arrested in Nicopolis c. 64 or 65 C.E.)
10. **Rome**—2Ti 1:17 (Paul's second imprisonment, likely 65 C.E.)

Years in parentheses mean sometime during this period

Related Scripture(s) Ro 15:24



Erastus Inscription in Corinth

Shown here is a paving stone found in a plaza near the theater in Corinth. The inscription refers to an official by the name of Erastus, who is said to have laid the pavement at his own expense. In his letter to the Christians in Rome, written from Corinth, Paul included greetings from “Erastus, the city treasurer.” (Ro 16:23) The pavement with the inscription is believed to have existed in the first century C.E., so some scholars suggest that the Erastus in the inscription is the same person referred to by Paul.

Related Scripture(s) Ro 16:23

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort”:** (10 min.)
 Ro 15:4—Read God’s Word for comfort (w17.07 14 ¶11)
 Ro 15:5—Petition Jehovah to supply you with “endurance and comfort” (w16.04 14 ¶15)
 Ro 15:13—Jehovah gives us hope (w14 6/15 14 ¶11)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ro 15:27—How were Gentile Christians “debtors” to the Christians in Jerusalem? (w89 12/1 24 ¶3)

Ro 16:25—What is “the sacred secret that has been kept in silence for long-lasting times”? (it-1 858 ¶15)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ro 15:1-16 (10)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (10)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (11)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 129
- **How Jehovah “Supplies Endurance and Comfort”:** (15 min.) Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then discuss the following questions:
 What lessons did you learn about receiving comfort?

What lessons did you learn about giving comfort?

- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 58
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 34 and Prayer

ROMANS 15-16 | Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort

15:4-7 

One way that Jehovah comforts us and helps us to endure is through his Word. How do these Bible examples comfort and encourage you?



• Noah



• Joseph



• David

Initial Call

Question: Is the Bible still relevant today?

Scripture: 2Ti. 3:16

Link: Is the Bible compatible with science?

Brandi (Publisher 1): My name's Brandi, and this is Julie. Today we're asking people what they think about this question: is the Bible still relevant today? What's your opinion?

Householder: Mmm. I am not sure it is.

Brandi (Publisher 1): Well, you're not alone. Many people just believe it's too old to be of any real use today. But it's interesting to note what the Bible claims. Have you ever read this passage before? It says: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, so that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

Brandi (Publisher 1): So, according to this verse, all scripture comes from where?

Householder: It says it's inspired of God.

Brandi (Publisher 1): That's right. Now if this claim is true, if it's really from a God who created everything, how would the Bible compare with scientific discoveries? Would it be compatible, or incompatible?

Householder: Well, I guess it would be compatible.

Brandi (Publisher 1): I agree. So perhaps the next time we're here we can discuss that question: is the Bible.

Householder: Well, OK, if you can find me at home.

Brandi (Publisher 1): OK. By the way, as I mentioned, my name is Brandi. May I ask yours?

Householder: My name's Anne.



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations



INITIAL CALL

Question: What is God's purpose for humans?

Scripture: **Ge 1:28**

Link: How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?



FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?

Scripture: **Isa 55:11**

Link: What will life be like when God fulfills his purpose?



SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What will life be like when God fulfills his purpose?

Scripture: **Ps 37:10, 11**

Link: What must we do to benefit from God's promises?

MEMORIAL INVITATION CAMPAIGN (March 23–April 19):

We want to invite you to a very important event. Here is your personal invitation. On Friday, April 19, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. This invitation shows the time and location of the

meeting being held in our area. We also invite you to a talk the week before entitled "Reach Out for the Real Life!"

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?

We Will Keep Enduring

(Matthew 24:13)

1. How can we endure

When trials come, as Jesus said?
Through his pain he saw
The joy of better things ahead.
God's promise, God's justice,
Were thoughts on which he fed.

(CHORUS)

*We need to have endurance.
Our faith we must defend.
His love is our assurance.
So we will keep enduring to the end.*

2. Though the passing years

May bring us sorrow, bring us pain;
There beyond the tears,
We see the life that we can gain.
To be there, feel free there,
Determined we remain.

(Chorus)

3. We will not give up

Nor see the need for doubt or fear.
Faithfully we'll serve
Until Jehovah's day is here.
Let's keep on enduring.
That time is very near.

(Chorus)

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Look to Jehovah for Endurance and Comfort”:** (10 min.)
 Ro 15:4—Read God’s Word for comfort (w17.07 14 ¶11)
 Ro 15:5—Petition Jehovah to supply you with “endurance and comfort” (w16.04 14 ¶15)
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15:4-7 

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• Noah



• Joseph



• David

58

HE MULTIPLIES LOAVES AND WARNS ABOUT LEAVEN

MATTHEW 15:32–16:12 MARK 8:1-21

- JESUS FEEDS 4,000 MEN
 - HE WARNS ABOUT THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES
-

Great crowds have flocked to Jesus in the region of the Decapolis, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. They have come to hear him and to be healed, bringing along large baskets, or hampers, of provisions.

In time, however, Jesus tells his disciples: “I feel pity for the crowd, because they have already stayed with me for three days and they have nothing to eat. If I send them off to their homes hungry, they will give out on the road, and some of them are from far away.” The disciples ask: “From where will anyone get enough bread in this isolated place to satisfy these people?”—Mark 8:2-4.

Jesus responds: “How many loaves do you have?” The disciples say: “Seven, and a few small fish.”



(Matthew 15:34) Then Jesus has the people recline on the ground. He takes the loaves and the fish, prays to God, and gives them to his disciples to distribute. Amazingly, all eat to satisfaction. The leftovers collected fill seven large provision baskets, even though about 4,000 men, as well as women and children, have eaten!

After Jesus sends the crowds away, he and the disciples cross by boat to Magadan, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here, Pharisees accompanied by some of the sect of the Sadducees try to test Jesus, asking him to display a sign from heaven.

Realizing what their motives are, Jesus replies: “When evening falls, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is fire-red,’ and in the morning, ‘It will be wintry, rainy weather today, for the sky is fire-red but gloomy.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but the signs of the times you cannot interpret.” (Matthew 16:2, 3) Then Jesus tells the Pharisees and Sadducees that no sign will be given them except the sign of Jonah.

Jesus and his disciples get in a boat and head toward Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the sea.

En route, the disciples discover that they forgot to bring enough bread. They have just one loaf. Having in mind his recent encounter with the Pharisees and the Sadducean supporters of Herod, Jesus warns: “Keep your eyes open; look out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” The disciples mistakenly think that his mention of leaven refers to their forgetting to bring bread. Noting their mistake, Jesus says: “Why do you argue over your having no bread?”—Mark 8:15-17.

Jesus had recently provided bread for thousands of people. So the disciples should know that he is not concerned about a lack of literal loaves. “Do you not remember,” he asks, “when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000 men, how many baskets full of fragments you collected?” They answer: “Twelve.” Continuing, Jesus says: “When I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000 men, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?” They reply: “Seven.”—Mark 8:18-20.

Jesus asks: “How is it you do not discern that I did not speak to you about bread?” He adds: “Watch

out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
—Matthew 16:11.

Finally, the disciples get the point. Leaven is used to cause fermentation and make bread rise. Jesus is here using leaven as a symbol of corruption. He is warning the disciples to be on guard against “the *teaching* of the Pharisees and Sadducees,” which has a corrupting effect.—Matthew 16:12.



- ◇ Why do people flock to Jesus?
- ◇ When Jesus mentions leaven, what do the disciples mistakenly think?
- ◇ What does Jesus mean by the expression “the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”?

Walking in Integrity

(Psalm 26)

1. Please judge me, Lord, observe my loyalty;
Observe my trust in you and my integrity.
Examine me, and put me to the test;
My mind and heart refine, that my soul might be blessed.

(CHORUS)

*But as for me, Determined I will be
to walk eternally In my integrity.*

2. I do not sit with wicked men of lies.
I hate the company of those who truth despise.
Jehovah, please, don't take away my life
With men who take delight in bribery and strife.

(Chorus)

3. For I have loved the dwelling of your house.
Your worship, oh, so pure, I daily will espouse.
And I will march around your altar grand,
To make thanksgiving heard aloud throughout the land.

(Chorus)

JANUARY 2019

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE: Millions of people around the world are welcomed to the Lord’s Evening Meal (See study article 5, paragraphs 1-2)

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1. Praise Jah with me;
Come! Let us sing!
He gives us life, breath, and ev'ry good thing.
Each day and night,
His name we bless,
Praising his love and his almightiness.
We sing his praise, and his name we confess.
2. Praise Jah with me;
He satisfies.
He hears our prayers as our needs he supplies.
His mighty arm
Strengthens the weak;
His holy spirit sustains all the meek.
His name we praise; Of his power we speak.
3. Praise Jah with me;
Our God is just.
He brings us comfort, in him we can trust.
Wrongs he will right;
Hearts he will heal.
Rich Kingdom blessings all mankind will feel.
Come let us praise him with joy and with zeal!

Praise Jehovah in the Congregation

*“In the midst of the congregation
I will praise you.”—PS. 22:22.*

SONG 59

Praise Jah With Me

PREVIEW

Like the psalmist David, all of us love Jehovah and enjoy praising him. We have a special opportunity to express our love for God when we meet with our congregation for worship. Some of us, however, find it difficult to comment at our meetings. If you face that challenge, this article can help you identify your fears and work on overcoming them.

KING DAVID wrote: “Jehovah is great and most worthy of praise.” (Ps. 145:3) He loved Jehovah, and that love moved him to praise God “in the midst of the congregation.” (Ps. 22:22; 40:5) No doubt, you love Jehovah and agree with David’s words: “May you be praised, O Jehovah the God of Israel our father, throughout all eternity.”—1 Chron. 29:10-13.

² Today, one way we praise Jehovah is by commenting during Christian meetings. However, a number of our brothers and sisters face a real challenge. They want to participate in the meetings, but fear prevents them. How can they cope with that fear? And what practical tips can help all of us to give encouraging comments? Before we answer those questions, let us first review four basic reasons why we comment at meetings.

WHY WE COMMENT AT MEETINGS

³ **Jehovah has given all of us the privilege to praise him.** (Ps. 119:108) Our comments at meetings

-
1. How did David feel about Jehovah, and what did this motivate him to do?
 2. (a) How can we praise Jehovah? (b) What challenges do some face, and what will we review?
 - 3-5. (a) As explained at Hebrews 13:15, why do we comment at meetings? (b) Must we all give the same type of comment? Explain.

are part of our “sacrifice of praise,” and no one can offer that sacrifice for us. (Read Hebrews 13:15.) Does Jehovah demand the same type of sacrifice, or comment, from each of us? No, he does not!

⁴ Jehovah knows that we have different abilities and circumstances, and he deeply appreciates the sacrifices we are able to offer to him. Think of the type of sacrifices that he accepted from the Israelites. Some Israelites were able to offer a lamb or a goat. But a poor Israelite might offer “two turtle-

Commenting benefits us and those who listen
(See paragraphs 6-7)



doves or two young pigeons.” And if an Israelite could not afford two birds, Jehovah accepted “a tenth of an ephah of fine flour.” (Lev. 5:7, 11) Flour was less expensive, but Jehovah still appreciated that sacrifice, as long as it was “fine flour.”

⁵ Our kind God feels the same way today. When we give comments, he does not demand that all of us be as eloquent as Apollos or as persuasive as Paul. (Acts 18:24; 26:28) All Jehovah wants is that we give the best comments we can—within our limits. Remember the widow who offered the two small coins. She was precious to Jehovah because she gave the best she could.—Luke 21:1-4.

⁶ We encourage one another by our comments. (Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.) All of us appreciate hearing a variety of comments at our meetings. We enjoy the simple, sincere words of a young child. We are inspired by the excitement in the voice of someone who is commenting about a truth that he or she has just discovered. And we admire those who “mustered up courage” to give a comment, even though they are shy or are only beginning to learn our language. (1 Thess. 2:2; ftn.) How can we show

6. (a) According to Hebrews 10:24, 25, how may the comments that we hear affect us? (b) How can you show appreciation for the answers that encourage you?

appreciation for their effort? We can thank them for their encouraging comment after the meeting. Another way is by giving a comment ourselves. Then not only do we receive encouragement at our meetings but we also give it.—Rom. 1:11, 12.

⁷ We benefit ourselves when we comment. (Isa. 48:17) How so? First, if we plan to give a comment, we are especially motivated to prepare well for the meeting. When we prepare well, we gain a deeper understanding of God’s Word. And the deeper our understanding, the better we can apply the things we learn. Second, we will likely enjoy the meeting more because we are involved in the discussion. Third, because it takes effort to comment, we often remember the points we spoke about long after the meeting ends.

⁸ We please Jehovah when we express our faith. We can be sure that Jehovah listens to us and deeply appreciates the effort we make to comment at meetings. (Read Malachi 3:16.) He shows his appreciation by blessing us when we try hard to please him.—Mal. 3:10.

7. How do we benefit when we comment?

8-9. (a) As revealed at Malachi 3:16, how do you think Jehovah feels about our comments? (b) What challenge might some still face?

⁹ Clearly, we have good reasons to comment at meetings. Still, some may be afraid to raise their hand. If that is how you feel, do not be discouraged. Let us consider some Bible principles, a few examples, and some practical tips that can help all of us to try to comment more at meetings.

COPING WITH FEAR

¹⁰ Do you get a knot in your stomach each time you even think of raising your hand to comment? If so, you are not alone. The truth is that most of us feel some fear when we comment. Before you can cope with this crippling feeling, you need to identify the cause of your fear. Are you afraid that you will forget what you want to say or that you will say the wrong thing? Do you worry that your comment will not be as good as the comments of others? Actually, those fears can be a good sign. They indicate that you are humble and view others as superior to you. Jehovah loves that quality. (Ps. 138:6; Phil. 2:3) But Jehovah also wants you to praise him and to encourage your brothers and sisters at the meetings. (1 Thess. 5:11) He loves you and will give you the courage you need.

10. (a) What fear do many of us have? (b) Why might having a fear of answering be a good sign?

11 Consider some Scriptural reminders. The Bible says that all of us make mistakes in what we say and how we say it. (Jas. 3:2) Jehovah does not expect us to be perfect, and neither do our brothers and sisters. (Ps. 103:12-14) They are our spiritual family, and they love us. (Mark 10:29, 30; John 13:35) They understand that our comments at times do not come out exactly right.

12 Think about some Bible examples that can help you to cope with your fears. Remember Nehemiah. He served in the court of a powerful king. Nehemiah was gloomy because he had heard that the walls and gates of Jerusalem were in ruins. (Neh. 1:1-4) Imagine the knot he might have had in his stomach when the king asked him to explain why he was looking so unhappy! Nehemiah quickly prayed and then gave his answer. In response, the king did much to help God's people. (Neh. 2:1-8) Think, too, of Jonah. When Jehovah asked him to speak to the inhabitants of Nineveh, Jonah was so scared that he ran in the opposite direction. (Jonah 1:1-3) But with Jehovah's help, Jonah carried out his assignment. And the words he spoke did much good for those in Nineveh.

11. What Scriptural reminders can help us?

12-13. What do we learn from the examples of Nehemiah and Jonah?

(Jonah 3:5-10) From Nehemiah we learn the importance of praying before we answer. And from Jonah we learn that Jehovah can help us to serve him despite our greatest fears. Realistically, is any congregation going to be as intimidating as the Ninevites?

¹³ What practical tips can help you to give encouraging comments at the meetings? Let us consider a few suggestions.

¹⁴ **Prepare for each meeting.** When you plan ahead and prepare well, you will feel more confident about commenting. (Prov. 21:5) Of course, we do not all have the same routine. Eloise, a widow in her 80's, begins preparing for the *Watchtower* Study early in the week. She says, "I enjoy the meetings more if I study in advance." Joy, who works secularly full-time, sets aside time on Saturday to study her *Watchtower*. "I like to have the material fresh in mind," she says. Ike, a busy elder who is also a pioneer, says, "I find that it is best for me to study for short periods of time throughout the week rather than in one large chunk of time."

¹⁵ What is involved in preparing well for the meeting? Begin each study session by asking Jehovah to

14. Why should we prepare well for our meetings, and when might we do so?

15. How can you prepare well for a meeting?

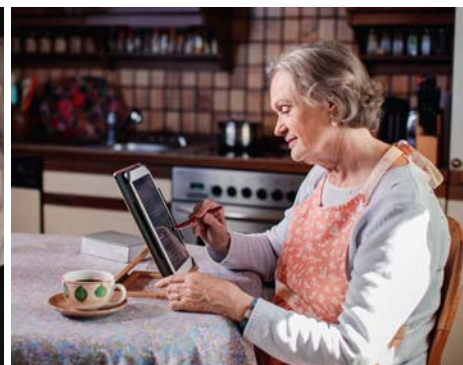
give you holy spirit. (Luke 11:13; 1 John 5:14) Then take a few minutes to look over the lesson. Analyze the title, subheadings, illustrations, and teaching boxes. As you now study each paragraph, read as many of the cited scriptures as you can. Meditate on the information, giving special attention to points you wish to comment on. The better you prepare, the more you will benefit and the easier it may be for you to comment.—2 Cor. 9:6.

16 If possible for you, use the digital tools provided in a language you know. Jehovah, through his organization, has given us electronic tools to help us prepare for the meetings. The *JW Library*[®] app enables us to download study publications onto a mobile device. Then we can study—or at least read or listen to the material—anytime and anywhere. Some use this tool to study during a lunch break at work or at school or while traveling. The *Watchtower Library* and the *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*[™] make it very easy to research points in the lesson that we wish to explore more thoroughly.

17 If possible, prepare several comments for

16. What tools are available to you, and how do you use them?

17. (a) Why is it good to prepare several comments? (b) What did you learn from the video *Become Jehovah's Friend—Prepare Your Comment*?



When do you schedule time to prepare for meetings?
(See paragraphs 14-16)

each lesson. Why? Because you may not always be called on when you raise your hand. Others will likely raise their hand at the same time, and the conductor might choose one of them. In order to keep the meeting on schedule, the conductor may have to limit the number of comments on any given point. So do not be offended or discouraged if he does not call on you early in the study. If you prepare several comments, you will have more opportunities to share in the discussion. One of the comments you

What Can I Comment On?

- ▶ The direct answer to the question
- ▶ A secondary point in the paragraph
- ▶ What a cited scripture teaches
- ▶ How the information can be applied
- ▶ A brief experience that highlights a key point
- ▶ What the artwork teaches
- ▶ The review questions

prepare could involve reading a scripture. But if you can, also prepare to give a comment, using your own words.*

18 Give brief comments. Often, the most encouraging comments are short and simple. So aim at keeping your answers brief. Try limiting them to about 30 seconds. (Prov. 10:19; 15:23) If you have been answering at meetings for many years, you have an important role to play—setting a good example by keeping your comments brief. If you give

* On jw.org, watch the video *Become Jehovah's Friend—Prepare Your Comment*. Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN.

18. Why give brief comments?

complex comments that last several minutes, others may feel intimidated, thinking that they will not be able to match your ability at answering. Also, brief comments allow time for more people to participate in the meeting. Especially if you are called on first, give a simple, direct answer to the question. Do not try to cover all the points in a paragraph. After the main idea of the paragraph has been discussed, you may comment on supplementary points.—See the box “What Can I Comment On?”

¹⁹ Let the conductor know that you would like to comment on a specific paragraph. If you choose to do this, you should approach the conductor well before the meeting begins. When it is time to comment on that paragraph, put your hand up quickly and high enough so that the conductor can see it.

²⁰ View the congregation meetings like a meal shared with good friends. Imagine that some friends in the congregation planned a barbecue and asked you to prepare some small item of food. How would you respond? You might feel a little anxious, but you would likely do your best to bring something that everyone could enjoy. Jehovah, our Host, has provided a table full of good things for us at our

19. How can the conductor help you, but what will you have to do?

20. How is a congregation meeting like a meal shared with friends?

meetings. (Ps. 23:5; Matt. 24:45) And he is pleased when we bring a simple gift, the best that we can give. So prepare well and participate as freely as you can. Then you will not only feed at Jehovah's table but also bring a gift to share with the congregation.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 16: Members of a congregation are joyfully sharing in a discussion of *The Watchtower*. **Page 23:** Some members of the congregation who were shown earlier participating in the *Watchtower* Study. Even though each of them has different circumstances, they all set aside time to study the lesson for the meeting.

CAN YOU ANSWER?

- What are some reasons why we comment at meetings?
- How can we cope with our fear of commenting?
- What are some tips to help us give encouraging comments?

Jehovah Is Your Name

(Psalm 83:18)

1. The living and true God—
The God of all creation
In ev'ry generation—
Jehovah is your name.
We're honored and we're proud
To be your congregation.
In ev'ry tribe and nation,
Your glory we proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, Jehovah,
There is no God like you.
There's no other in the heavens
Or on the earth below.
You alone are God Almighty,
And this all men must know.
Jehovah, Jehovah,
We have no other God but you.*

2. You cause us to become
Whatever you desire,
To do as you require—
Jehovah is your name.
And Witnesses for you
Is what you've kindly named us.
We're honored you have claimed us—
A people for your name.

(Chorus)

