



THINK IT THROUGH

Note the diversity in this list:

- There are men and women
- There are Jews (Aquila + Priscilla) and Gentiles (Urbanus, Hermes)
- There are slave names (Ampliatus, Urbanus, Hermes) and there are wealthy people (Aristobulus was the Grandson of Herod the Great!)

What does this tell us about:

- The power of the gospel?
- The need for unity?
- The importance of Christian partnerships?

Most of the people in this list are not seen anywhere else in the Bible. Many are simply referred to, in one way or another, as fellow Christians and some are only named. However, The Holy Spirit, through Paul's writing, has shown us that these 'ordinary Christians' are special and vital by naming them in the Bible.

Is there an encouragement here for you?

Do you think that your name is recorded somewhere?

How would these individuals have felt when they saw their names at the end of Paul's letter? What's the lesson for us in terms of acknowledging others?



PRAY IT THROUGH

Thank God for the reminder that all Christians are special – we all have our names recorded.

Thank God for the diversity and unity that we enjoy in our own church.

Ask him to help us work at and keep this unity.

SPEAKING FROM THE BACKGROUND

(Studies of some lesser-known people of the Bible.)

SMALL GROUP SHEET WEEK BEGINNING

29 July 2012

**Last, but by no means least
(Romans 16)**

Oakhall
CHURCH WELCOMES YOU



FOR STARTERS

At the end of an exciting movie there comes a long, long list of credits that rolls up the screen, listing everybody that has had anything to do with the making of the film. If we are at the movies this is the sign for us to make for the exit; at home we get up and make a cup of tea. We don't pay any attention to it. At the end of Paul's letter to the Romans he lists 26 different individuals, plus a number of church groups and some unnamed associates. There is a tendency to treat this in the same way as the credits, as a less important add-on at the end of a great book.



BACKGROUND

Romans is probably the fullest expression of Paul's theology and is often described as a Christian manifesto. It is rich in teaching and doctrine. Little wonder then that we are tempted to skip, what at first glance is simply a list of credits at the end of the letter. The people in this list could be considered 'ordinary Christians' like us, but by naming them in this way Paul shows us that they too are special.



INVESTIGATE

Phoebe (Read Romans 16:1-2).

Discuss how much Paul packs in about her in these two verses:

- How he introduces her
- How they should welcome her
- What else they should do, and why



INVESTIGATE

Priscilla and Aquila. (Read Rom 16:3-5(a)).

These are probably the best known people in this list. They appear in Acts (18:2, 18:18-19), at the end of 1 Cor 19:19 and also in 2 Tim 4:19. In each case they are mentioned as a husband and wife 'team'. What do we learn about them and from them?

Read Rom 16:5b-16.

Although most of the other individuals get a briefer mention, they all have some positive thing said about them. See what you can discover. (You may wish to work in groups.)

- *Epenetus, Mary, Andronicus and Junias.*

- *Ampliatius, Urbanus, Stachys.*

- *Apelles, the family of Aristobulus, Herodion, the family of Narcissus.*

- *Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus and his mother.*

- *Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and the saints with them.*