

Sunday, September 2, 2018—I Corinthians 16:15-18 Addicted to the Ministry

I Corinthians 16:15

- *Stephanas*—and his household are described as being the “firstfruits of Achaia.” I take that to mean that Stephanas and his family were the first ones to respond positively to Paul’s ministry in Achaia.
 - I Corinthians 1:16—the “household of Stephanas” is mentioned in Chapter 1 as one of the few sets of folks that Paul elected to baptize.
- *Addicted*—the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines this meaning of “addicted” as follows:
 - To practice devotion to an occupation, activity, or object.
 - To dedicate or devote oneself to an occupation, activity, or object.
Now *rare* and *arch.*
 - I Cor. 16:15 is cited as an example of this use.
- Now at the end of I Corinthians we learn that the “house of Stephanas” was very active in terms of ministry in Corinth.

I Corinthians 16:16

- *Helpeth with us*—the Greek verb carries the following meanings according to Strong’s Concordance:
 - II Corinthians 6:1—“workers together”
- Colossians 4:7—Tychicus is a fellowservant in the Lord.
- Philemon 1—notice the similarities between the way Paul addresses Philemon and how he describes Tychicus in Colossians 4.
 - Notice that Paul calls Philemon a fellowlabourer. It comes from the Greek word “soonergos” which means a co-laborer, companion in labor, or helper
- Philemon was a helper of Paul, he helped him carry on the work of the ministry. Paul was in prison in Rome and viewed the work that Philemon was doing as essential and benefiting the ministry.
- Paul needed people who were willing and able to help him in his ministry.
- Romans 16:3—“helpers” comes from the same Greek word that occurs in Philemon.

- Romans 16:3-22—in this one passage alone Paul mentions 31 people who have helped him in his ministry.
- I found every occurrence of the Greek word that is translated fellowlabour, or helper and counted the number of names that were mentioned in connection with it. There are at least 45 people Paul mentions as being fellowlabours or partners in his ministry. This number does not count all of the people Paul had contacts with and never mentions.
- Paul's ministry was a success for three reasons
 - He had a purpose—to have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth and see the fellowship of the mystery.
 - He has a strategy—he established independent churches in centers of population.
 - He had fellowlabours—with men like Stephanas, Tychicus, and Philemon or women like Phebe Paul would not have been able to fulfill his mission as the Apostle of Gentiles. The folks embraced Paul's purpose and strategy as their own and worked to help Paul build the Body of Christ.
- The work of the ministry is not just about the pastor and his ability to teach and preach but it's about what can be accomplished as a body of believers.