

Romans 14

Diverse Community

Read: Romans 14:1-23

Summary:

Paul has just been giving instructions on love and now focuses on the church. We believe the weak mainly refers to the Jewish believers who were keen to maintain their observance of the Old Testament food law and celebrating special days. The strong probably were the Gentile believers who readily accepted the grace of God recognising they had 'nothing to offer' for their salvation. What we are certain is that the church in Rome was a diverse bunch which could provide challenges that Paul said must be overcome because of the death and resurrection of Jesus; who soon will return in glory to judge the world.

Don't Judge One Another Paul's first word on relationships is acceptance! We are not to make others feel inferior or unwanted because God has accepted them. Accept is not just welcoming into membership but welcoming them into our heart, our home, our circle of friends.

Avoid Offending One Another What we think affects what we say, we effects how we act and determines who we are! Even though all foods are OK to eat Paul instructs them not to put a stumbling block in the way of their brother, instead they are to act in love: Christ died for Him and the Kingdom is much more important than my freedom. Romans 15:7 *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.* We are to be a diverse community focused on God centred worship!

Application:

Please select from the following. The aim is to encourage honest application, please do not attempt all the questions. It is really good to make time to pray for one another!

1. Was there anything preached that needs clarifying to you?
2. What one thing did God say to you and what do you need to do as a result?
3. How do you overcome the tendency to just spend time with people who are like you?
4. When we have been offended by someone in the church, what stops us instantly forgiving them? How can we change?
5. Thinking is where it all starts. How can we train ourselves to think the best, not be critical or be generous?
6. What are some of the benefits of a diverse church as opposed to just being with those who are 'like us'?