



LETTER TO PHILEMON

HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE

Paul's letter to Philemon explores Christian compassion. In many ways, it parallels Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, which captures the gospel in a nutshell. The letter speaks of failure, the need for intercession, returning, forgiveness, and restoration. Getting our relationships right is just as important as getting doctrine right. If we are genuine disciples of Christ, we will relate to our fellow believers with grace, forgiveness, and encouragement.

MESSAGE NOTES: Philemon 1-7

SMALL GROUP STUDY: Philemon 1-7

Paul expressed his deep love for his Christian friends, and he reminds them that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul tells Philemon that he is praying for him, asking God to make his witness effective so that others would trust Christ. He also prayed that his friend would have a deeper understanding of all that he had in Jesus Christ. After all, the better we know Christ and experience His blessings, the more we want to share these blessings with others.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

When you meet someone for the first time, how do you introduce yourself?

READ PHILEMON 1-7

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR DISCUSSIONS

What does Paul mean by saying he is 'a prisoner of Christ Jesus'?

PHILEMON 1

What two attributes is Paul affirming in Philemon? PHILEMON 5

What is the focus of those two attributes? PHILEMON 5

If someone knew you only by reputation, what would they affirm about your faith?

Paul affirms their faith and love. What is it about their faith and love, that Paul is encouraged by? PHILEMON 6-7

How are you doing at affirming and encouraging those around you?

TAKE THE TIME TO PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

MESSAGE NOTES: Philemon 8-25

SMALL GROUP STUDY: Philemon 8-25

Paul requests for Philemon to welcome back Onesimus as a brother in Christ. Paul bases this appeal partly on his relationship with Onesimus, but the primary emphasis is on the bond that Philemon and Onesimus share as believers.

OPEN IN PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

How good are you at fixing things?

READ PHILEMON 8-25

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE

What were the main truths you heard from the message on Sunday?

USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR DISCUSSIONS

What is Paul's relationship to Onesimus? PHILEMON 10; 12

What is radical about Paul's view of Onesimus? PHILEMON 10-18

Does the fact that someone (eg: Onesimus) has become a Christian, lessen the seriousness of previous crimes?

What is Christlike, about what Paul offers to do? PHILEMON 17-20

How does Paul draw Philemon's attention to the larger purposes of God? PHILEMON 15-25

When are we obligated to forgive someone?

Is there a broken relationship in your life, that you could or should rectify?

TAKE THE TIME TO PRAY FOR EACH OTHER