

1 Corinthians 16:1-24 - 'Final' Instructions  
Small group notes for the facilitator

**Opener: If you knew you only had a few minutes left to live what instructions would you need to give to those you were leaving behind? (Make it light hearted! :-)**

This final chapter of Paul's letter to the Corinthians (likely at least his second but we call it 'first') is his opportunity to give his final thoughts and blessings. Paul has two responses to questions put to him by the Corinthian church ("now concerning" in v1 and v12) and also some travel plans to tell them.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-12 to start off with.

**Q. What should the Corinthians do with their money?**

A. Trick question - it's not theirs it's the Lords! :-) Paul isn't asking them to 'tithe' - he's asking them give from their abundance every Sunday ('first day of the week' or 'Lord's Day') on top of what they already give.

**Q. Who is the money for and why do you suppose they need it?**

A. It would seem that it's for the Jerusalem church (v3). When you think back to Acts 6 and the "daily distribution of food to the widows" - both Jew and Gentile, there's a good chance that the Jews have turned against the Christians and are no longer providing food for the poor and needy.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians on what we term his 'third missionary journey' while he was in Ephesus. He had already been to Corinth on his second journey (which Timothy had joined him and Silas on). Paul is confident in Timothy's abilities.

**Q. How do we know of Paul's confidence in Timothy? Why would the Corinthian church possibly despise him?**

A. Paul sends a hearty recommendation that Timothy is doing the Lord's work like him (v10). The model for discipleship with Paul is to walk with his disciple for at least a year (as Barnabas had done with him on the first missionary journey) so he can equip him. Now Timothy is ready to go out as a leader (along with Erastus - Acts 19:22). Paul is concerned about Timothy's age - that people might despise him because of it (1 Tim 4:12). Presumably people would wonder what on earth such a young chap could possibly teach them.

You can read more about this in Acts 19 - read it together if you have time as it's almost comical in places!

Q. In verse 12, why do you suppose Paul tells them that Apollos isn't coming?

A. "Now concerning" suggests that they'd asked Paul if Apollos was coming. Some loved his teachings ("I follow Apollos" 1:12, 3:4). Apollos also features in Acts 19 (v1) he had clearly only just left them. Just out of interest Apollos is one of the names put forward as the author of Hebrews.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13-24.

I tend to think that Paul's saying here to pay attention to the 'household of Stephanas' rather than being so concerned about Apollos. Stephanas is a great man to look up to as an Christian example. He is also possibly the deliverer of the letter from Corinth and may well be delivering this letter on his return (v17).

The two verses I picked out on Sunday were v14 - "Let all that you do be done in love," and v22 - "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed [he is accursed]." Verse 14 possibly sums up the message of 1 Corinthians and verse 22 sums up who Paul is writing to.

**Q. Go back through the topics that Paul has covered in 1 Corinthians (you can probably find at least one per chapter) and see how often his solution is that they should be more loving to one another. Remember: Love (gk. Agape) means self-giving expecting nothing in return.**

**Final: How do we apply this today then? You're in a small group and there's probably been plenty of times that you've shown love in specific ways to one another. What are those ways? Why not encourage one another by sharing these stories along those of others in the church.**

**One for the road: How can you act more loving (love is verb!) towards others in the church? Are there people you've been worshipping with for years who you don't even know? By definition the church is to be known by their love for one another (John 13:35).**