



Generosity and Gospel Ministry

Romans 15:22-33

Main Idea: Gospel ministry requires generosity to care for the body of Christ and to advance the cause of Christ.

Gospel ministry requires the generosity of God's people (22-29).

- *Generosity funds the advancement of the cause of Christ (24).*
- *Generosity funds the care of the body of Christ (25-28).*

While Paul desired to go and to spend time with the church in Rome, his work in gospel ministry in Asia Minor was God's call. Now that his work there was done, Paul was shifting his focus to Spain, with the hopes of stopping in Rome along the way. As Paul shared his prayerful plans with the Roman church, he reminded them of the need for generosity to fund the work of the gospel. Gospel ministry requires the generosity of God's people. Paul pointed to two ways that this requirement was – and always is – true. First, generosity funds the advancement of the cause of Christ. Paul prepared the church in Rome that his visit was focused on advancing the gospel to Spain. In order to make that trip, Paul would need their help. He was counting on the church in Rome to partner with him in the work of advancing the gospel. He was depending on their generosity to help fund his continued journey into Spain. This was and still is the model for funding the work of the mission through the generosity of local churches that are committed to be a part of that mission through their giving. Second, generosity funds the care of the body of Christ. After calling for Rome's generosity, Paul informed them of the generosity of other churches, who had already given to meet the needs of the church in Jerusalem. There was a spiritual principle in giving to help the church in Jerusalem. These Gentile believers had shared in the spiritual blessings of the church in Jerusalem through the mission work that started there, so now they had a spiritual responsibility to help meet the material needs that were present because of persecution of the church in Jerusalem. This wasn't a general, social ministry. This was meeting real needs to care for and to protect the body of Christ.

1. Paul had longed to go to Rome for years, but he couldn't because of God's call and his work in Asia Minor. What does this reveal about Paul's priorities? Is God's call your priority? Are you willing to give up or wait on things you want until God's will allows for those things?
2. In verse 24, Paul prepared the church in Rome for his hopeful trip there. What specifically did he prepare them to do? Why is generosity in the church required to advance the gospel? How does God use generosity in the church to advance the gospel? Is this still true today? Are you giving with a focus on advancing the gospel?
3. In verses 25-28, Paul told the church in Rome that he first had to deliver a gift to the church in Jerusalem. What does this gift reveal about how God uses generosity in the church to meet needs inside the body of Christ? Is this still true today? Are you giving with a focus on meeting needs inside the body of Christ?



Gospel ministry deserves the prayers of God's people (30-33).

- *Pray for protection in gospel ministry (31).*
- *Pray for success in gospel ministry (31).*
- *Pray for the advancement of gospel ministry (32).*

Finally, Paul urged the Roman church to pray for him! Gospel ministry deserves the prayers of God's people. Specifically, Paul asked them to pray for protection in gospel ministry. Going to Jerusalem was dangerous. The Jews hated the church, and bold leaders like Paul – who used to be leaders among the Jews – were a real threat. Paul knew the danger of going to Jerusalem, but he knew that delivering the gift to the church there was what he was supposed to do. So he asked for prayers so that God would protect his work in gospel ministry to get this gift to the church in Jerusalem. He also asked for success in gospel ministry. Paul's hope was that this gift from the churches in Asia Minor would be a blessing and would be acceptable and would meet real needs in the church in Jerusalem. His work needed God's protection and God's work to bring success. Paul also asked them to pray for the advancement of gospel ministry. Once the gift had been delivered, Paul was ready to go! His desire was to go to Spain in order to share the gospel there, and his hope was to stop in Rome along the way. Paul asked for their prayers because of their shared union in Christ and love in the Spirit. He asked for their prayers according to God's will and for God's work, and he prayed for the God of peace to be with them!

1. In verse 30, Paul appealed to the Roman church based on two important factors. What were the two things that joined them together with Paul and should have motivated them to pray for Paul? How do these two things still join us together with believers all around the world?
2. How did Paul ask for prayers related to the protection of God's work? What are ways that we can pray for the protection of God's work today? How can we do that in specific ways for those our church helps to send to in gospel ministry to care for the body of Christ and advance the cause of Christ? Look at imb.org/pray and discuss how this resource can help you and your group to pray for gospel ministry in specific ways.
3. How did Paul ask for prayers related to the success of God's work? What are ways that we can pray for the success of God's work today?
4. How did Paul ground these requests in his desire for the continued advancement of the gospel into Spain? Why should we pray for the advancement of gospel ministry today?
5. In verse 32, what is the key that Paul continues to rely on when it comes to the answer to these prayers? Here's a hint: It follows "so that..." How do we pray for God's will?