

## Supporting Notes & Questions

Week beginning Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

*Prepared by Howard Jackson.*

### Background

By chapter 12 Paul has completed his scripture-based argument for including Gentiles in and excluding the Jewish Law from God's kingdom. Thus establishing a sound basis for Christian faith and belief. He next sets out his vision for Christian living in a non-believing society, and in a multi-cultural church. He ends his letter with personal greetings. Note that about ⅓ are women leaders of the Christian churches of his time.

### Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Romans Chapter 12

VV1-2 Paul tells them to let their bodies be under God's control and renew their minds and avoid the cultural norms around them. How difficult is this for us in our secular society? Are you sure of God's will?  
VV3-8 The antidote to any kind of assumed supremacy is realising we are all equal in God's kingdom. Even though we have individual gifts to help God's kingdom grow, they are all of equal importance and we cannot use them in isolation. How good are we at working together to help God's kingdom grow?  
VV9-21 Paul exhorts them with a long list illustrating love in action. Is your love as sincere as this?

### Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Romans Chapter 13

VV1-7 Paul advises they regard governments, no matter how oppressive, divisive or incompetent, as God's choice. In our more democratic state, does God influence our votes or support our choice?  
VV8-10 Love in action. Which commandment encapsulates all the others?  
VV11-14 The end of the age approaches – be ready! How do you “clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus?”

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Romans Chapter 14

VV1-9 Respect each other's sensibilities. Perhaps the other's faith does not allow running the risk of eating meat produced according to pagan rites. Maybe the other does not celebrate holy days. Whatever you do, you do it for the Lord. Should we eat only Fair Trade or organic food? Do you make “Sunday special”?  
VV10-23 If you are inclined to judge another's sensibilities, remember that God will judge you in the end. And don't upset another by openly doing what they shun. Rather, keep the peace by leaving your own opinions between you and God. Are you always careful to respect other people's foibles?

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 15

VV1-13 Paul seems to be continuing his advice to the Christians in Rome about harmonious living. But there is an unstated reason behind the subjects he chooses in the two chapters. What was it? Think about the two kinds of Christians there and what their social backgrounds were. He has advice for both of them.  
VV14-22 Paul outlines his work as the Apostle to the Gentiles which has so far kept him from Rome.  
VV23-33 Paul intends to visit Rome once his duty to deliver aid to the poorer Christians in Jerusalem has been discharged. You read in Acts 21 (from Luke's diaries!) a dramatic account of his plans going awry.

### Friday 5<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 16

VV1-16 Paul's personal greetings to people he knew in Rome. Some are familiar names from elsewhere in the New Testament. Priscilla and Aquila - Acts 18. Rufus – Mark 15.  
VV17-19 A final warning to watch out for the Jews who travelled around, undermining Pauls' teaching.  
VV20-23 Paul's co-workers send their greetings. Some of them are familiar figures in Paul's story. Timothy appears in Acts 16 and Paul takes him on as a fellow evangelist. Gaius, who was from Derbe, appears in Acts 19 and 20 as Paul's travelling companion. Tertius, Paul's scribe, sends his own greetings. Is this a hint that Paul's eyesight was not up to the job? Or did Paul find it easier and quicker to dictate than write?  
VV24-27 Paul's final word to Rome is a prayer that reinforces the thrust of his letter.

### Postscript

Paul did reach Rome eventually, but not as a free man, but as a prisoner of the Roman authorities awaiting a hearing with the Roman Emperor. He was given a warm welcome by the Christians in Rome. (Acts 28)