



Getting started

- Who wrote Romans?
- When was it written (roughly): 27, 57, 87?

Session 1: Gospel.

How can we become more confident in our faith?

ROMANS 1.1 17

KEY VERSE:

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ...'

ROMANS 1.16 (ESV)

Part I: The back story

ROMANS 16



WHO WROTE ROMANS?

'Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God ...'

ROMANS 1.1 (NIV)



WHO WAS ROMANS WRITTEN TO?

Paul's greetings at the end of the letter (Romans 16) describe a close-knit and diverse community of Christians. They met in several house churches in ancient Rome.



WHO BROUGHT THE LETTER TO ROME?

'I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchraee, that you may welcome her in the Lord ...'

ROMANS 16.1 2 (ESV)



WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING MESSAGE OF ROMANS?

Two main concerns pulsate through the letter: unity and mission. Paul wants to unite Jewish and Gentile Christians around the gospel so they can play their part in God's mission.

'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you ...'

ROMANS 15.7 (NIV)



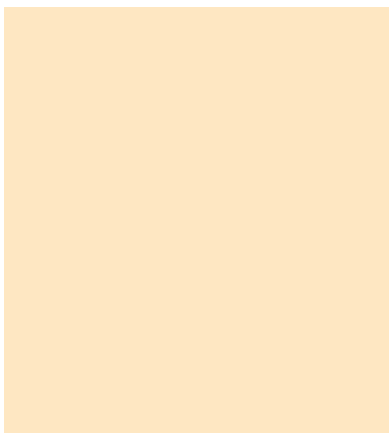
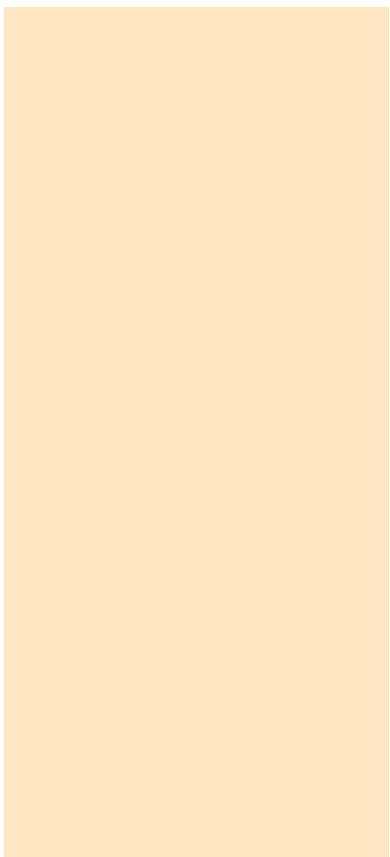
Discussion time

READ ROMANS 16.1-16

What strikes you about the list of names and greetings in general?

What phrases capture the quality of their relationships together? What specific attributes and contributions

NOTES:



Session 2: Sin.





Discussion time

READ ROMANS 1.18–25

1. Consider Romans 1.19–20. What can we learn about God from creation? What gives you a sense of wonder?
2. Consider Romans 1.21–23 and Romans 1.25. In what ways does sin lead to a downward spiral? How have you experienced this?
3. What idols are we prone to serving today – in culture and in our own hearts? Consider Romans 1.25. How might worshipping God be a powerful way to reverse the negative effects of sin and idolatry?

NOTES:



Part II: What's wrong with religion?

IF ROMANS 1 FOCUSES ON THE PROBLEM OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS,
ROMANS 2 HIGHLIGHTS THE DANGER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

'You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself ...'

ROMANS 2.1 (NIV)

IF WE ASSUME WE ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, WE BECOME PROUD, CRITICAL



READING ROMANS:

Before the next session,
read the following
passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 3.21–26
- READING 2:
Romans 3.27–31
- READING 3:
Romans 4.1–12

READING SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 2 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 3: Salvation.

What's so amazing about grace?

'All are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.'

ROMANS 3.24 (NIV)

Part I: Justified by faith

How does the death of Jesus put us right with God?



THE SLAVE MARKET (redemption)

'... all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.'

ROMANS 3.24 (NIV)



THE TEMPLE (sacrifice)

'God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood - to be received by faith.'

ROMANS 3.25 (NIV)

LAW COURT (justice)

'[God] did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.'

ROMANS 3.26 (NIV)



Discussion time

READ ROMANS 3.21–26

1. If you had to post a one-minute video on social media explaining how guilty people can be put right with God, what might you say?
2. Review each of the three metaphors Paul uses:
 1. The slave-market (verse 24)
 2. The temple sacrifice (verse 25)
 3. The law court (verse 26)

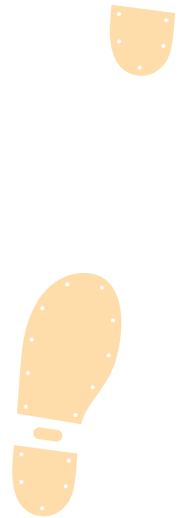
How does each picture help us appreciate what Christ accomplished for us? Which feels most significant for you right now?

3. Do you tend to focus more on God's standard of justice or his work to justify us? How does forgetting one or the other affect our view of God, ourselves and others?

NOTES:

God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

Part II: Living by faith



Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 4.18–25

How does Abraham's example inspire us? Consider verse 18: 'Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed ...' What past disappointments hold us back? What might it mean for us to believe God and step out in faith?

NOTES:



READING
ROMANS:

Before the next session, read the following passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 5.1–5
- READING 2:
Romans 5.6–8
- READING 3:
Romans 5.9–11
- READING 4:
Romans 5.12–17
- READING 5:
Romans 5.18–21



READING
SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 3 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 4: Peace.

How can we find rest in a stressful world?

KEY VERSE:

'But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'

ROMANS 5.8 (NIV)

Romans 5 reflects on our experience of salvation.

How confident are you that God loves you?



Part I: God's peace is a certain fact

How does the death of Jesus put us right with God?

PEACE WITH GOD

'Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we
have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ...'

ROMANS 5.1 (NIV)



ACCESS TO GOD

'... through [Christ] we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.'

ROMANS 5.2 (NIV)

How does the death of Jesus put us right with God?

'... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.'

ROMANS 5.8 (NIV)



Discussion time

READ ROMANS 5.1–2, 9–10

1. What has helped you to become more assured of God's love for you personally?
2. In what ways do we struggle to believe that we have peace with God? How does Romans 5.1–2 help us to overcome this?
3. Do you ever struggle in worship or feel unwelcome in God's presence? What keeps you at a distance from God? How can Romans 5.9–10 help us?

Part II: God's peace is a lived experience

WE EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE EVEN THROUGH SUFFERING

As Christians, we won't avoid suffering but we can experience it in a different way.

'Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope ...'

ROMANS 5.3-4 (ESV)

WE EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

We can know God loves us as a fact (Romans 5.8) and feel God's love as a personal experience.

'... God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.'

ROMANS 5.5 (NIV)



Session 5: Freedom.

How can we avoid negative cycles?

‘Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life ... sin shall no longer be your master ...’

ROMANS 6.13–14 (NIV)

Part I: Know who you are

‘What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!’

ROMANS 6.1–2 (ESV)

INSTEAD, GRACE GIVES US A NEW IDENTITY SO WE CAN LIVE IN FREEDOM

‘Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were buried therefore with him ... in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.’

ROMANS 6.3–4 (ESV)

A Christian is united with Christ or 'in Christ'.

As Jesus died for our sin, so we have died with him: 'our old self was crucified with [Christ] ...'

ROMANS 6.6 (ESV)

As Jesus rose again, so we are alive in him: 'we too may live a new life.'

ROMANS 6.4 (NIV)



Discussion time

READ ROMANS 6.3–4,11

1. To what extent do you know that you died with Christ and have been set free from the reign of sin? What difference does this make to your sense of identity?
 2. In what area of your life is fighting sin hard at the moment? How can we 'count on' who we are in Christ and not give in to temptation?
 3. Re-read verse 11 and in place of 'sin' silently hold out an area of your life (e.g. anger, greed, lust) to God.
-

Part II: Live out your new identity

ROMANS 7 EXPRESSES AN HONEST CRY OF FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE

'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?'

ROMANS 7.24 (NIV)

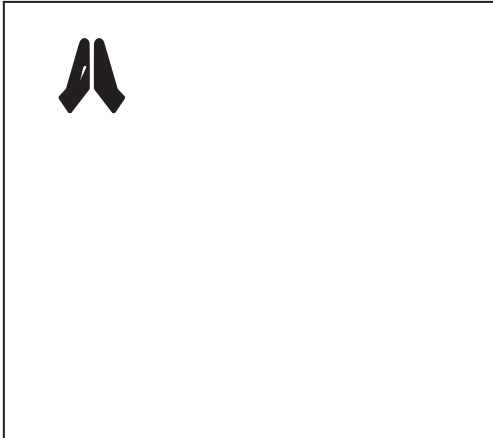
ROMANS 7 REMINDS US THAT MORAL LAWS AND RULES CANNOT CHANGE

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 6.12–13

What practical changes could you make to stop sin getting close to you?

What would it mean to offer yourself more fully as an instrument in God's hands?



NOTES:



READING
ROMANS:

Before the next session, read the following passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 8.1–4
- READING 2:
Romans 8.5–11
- READING 3:
Romans 8.12–17
- READING 4:
Romans 8.18–30
- READING 5:
Romans 8.31–39



READING
SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 5 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 6: Hope.

What has God promised?

ROMANS 8.23 24 (NIV)

Part II: God is for us

Justification

ROMANS 8.1–11



Adoption

ROMANS 8.12–17



Glorification

ROMANS 8.18–30

OUR FUTURE HOPE GIVES US COURAGE TO KEEP GOING THROUGH LIFE'S CHALLENGES



NEW CREATION

'... the whole of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth ...'

ROMANS 8.22 (NIV)



NEW BODIES

'... we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.'

ROMANS 8.23 (NIV)



NEW SECURITY

Romans 8 concludes with some amazing promises

'If God is for us, who can be against us?'

ROMANS 8.31 (NIV)

'... we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.'

ROMANS 8.37 (NIV)

'... [nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

ROMANS 8.39 (NIV)

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 8.31–39

Which truths in these verses are you already living in the light of?
Which do you find most difficult to believe and why?

NOTES:



READING
ROMANS:

READING
SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 6 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 7: Mystery.

If God is sovereign, what is our role?

ROMANS 9 11

KEY VERSE:

'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!'

ROMANS 11.33 (NIV)

Part I: Backstage – God is Sovereign

ROMANS 9; 11

PAUL IS PASSIONATE ABOUT HIS OWN PEOPLE, THE JEWS

'For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people ...'

ROMANS 9.3 (NIV)

In Romans 9, Paul redefines the covenant people (Israel) according to God's purpose of election.

In Romans 11, Paul describes God's mysterious purpose to use the salvation of the Gentiles to bring many Jewish people to faith in their Messiah.

Discussion time

READ ROMANS 9.14–16, 19–21; 11.25–32

NOTES:

Part II: Onstage – we are responsible

READ ROMANS 10

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 10.9–13

In what ways can we demonstrate our allegiance to Christ today?

What might it mean for you to have 'beautiful feet'? How can we go out of our way to share God's love and truth?

NOTES:

- Chapter 7 of

Session 8: Devotion.

How can we live full on for God?

ROMANS 12

KEY VERSE:

'I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God ...'

ROMANS 12.1 (NIV)

Part I: Living sacrifices

ROMANS 12.1-2

In view of God's mercy:



WE MUST BREAK WITH PAST WAYS OF LIVING

'Do not conform to the pattern of this world ...'

ROMANS 12.2 (NIV)



WE MUST EMBRACE GOD'S TRUTH

'... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

ROMANS 12.2 (NIV)



WE MUST DEVOTE OUR WHOLE SELVES TO GOD

'Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering.'

ROMANS 12.1 (THE MESSAGE)

READ ROMANS 12.1-2

Part II: Loving servants

ROMANS 12.3–21

WE ARE TO BE LOVING SERVANTS IN GOD'S FAMILY

'Be devoted to one another in love' – using our gifts, offering hospitality and sharing our resources (verse 10, NIV).

WE ARE TO BE LOVING SERVANTS TOWARDS OUR ENEMIES

'Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse' (verse 14, NIV).

'Do not repay anyone evil for evil' (verse 17, NIV).

'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink' (verse 20, NIV).

'Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good' (verse 21, NIV).

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 12.14–21

What might it mean for us to serve others and 'overcome evil with good'? Is there someone who has hurt us to whom God is calling us to show kindness?

NOTES:



READING
ROMANS:

Before the next session, read the following passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 13.1–7
- READING 2:
Romans 13.8–10
- READING 3:
Romans 13.11–14
- READING 4:
Romans 14.1–12
- READING 5:
Romans 14.13–23



READING
SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 8 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 9: Community.

How can we live together in love?

'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit ...'

ROMANS 14.17 (NIV)



Discussion time

READ ROMANS 13.1–5

1. What do you make of the idea that secular authorities are 'God's servants'? In what ways do we find it challenging to 'submit' to those in authority in our context?
2. Under what circumstances might forms of civil disobedience be justified for Christians? Try to think of some specific examples.

READ ROMANS 13.6–14

3. What might it mean practically for us to:
 - Contribute to the good of society
 - Live in the light of Christ

NOTES:

Part II: How to be a positive member of Christ's Church

GOD'S GOAL FOR THE CHURCH IS UNITY NOT UNIFORMITY

'Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.'

ROMANS 15.7 (NIV)

WE MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MATTERS

THOSE WITH A 'STRONG' CONSCIENCE MUST BE CONSIDERATE

'It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.'

ROMANS 14.21 (NIV)

THOSE WITH A 'WEAK' CONSCIENCE MUST ACT WITH CONVICTION

'... whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.'

ROMANS 14.23 (NIV)

WE MUST PROTECT OUR UNITY IN CHRIST

'Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.'

ROMANS 14.19 (NIV)

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 14.17–19

Think of someone you know who is a channel of peace and unity without compromising the gospel. What can we learn from their example?

How does this passage challenge the way we treat one another? In what areas may this be necessary today?



PRAYER

Pray for God to make you a channel of peace and unity by accommodating differences without compromising the gospel.

NOTES:



READING ROMANS:

Before the next session, read the following passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 15.1–7
- READING 2:
Romans 15.8–21
- READING 3:
Romans 15.22–33
- READING 4:
Romans 16.1–16
- READING 5:
Romans 16.17–27



READING SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 9 of
Romans: A Letter That
Makes Sense of Life
by Andrew Ollerton

Session 10: Mission.



We can share the gospel in three ways:

- What was Paul's mission?

'It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known ...'

ROMANS 15.20 (NIV)

Words
of truth

Deeds
of
kindness

Signs
and
wonders



Discussion time

READ ROMANS 15.17–20

1. Consider your community and friends. What people or situations spring to mind where the power of the gospel is desperately needed?
2. Paul outlined three missional practices. Which comes most naturally to you and which are you prone to neglect? How can we become more intentional about each practice?

READ ROMANS 15.30–33

3. In verse 30, Paul says 'join me in my struggle'. Why can mission be a 'struggle'? What might it mean for us to share the gospel in ways that are ambitious and entrepreneurial today?

Part II: The ground we've covered

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel ...'

ROMANS 1.16 (NIV)

How confident are you in the gospel now?



THE GOSPEL IS A ROOTED STORY

'... the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God ...'

ROMANS 16.25–26 (NIV)

THE GOSPEL IS A RELEVANT STORY

'... the obedience that comes from faith ...'

ROMANS 16.26 (NIV)

THE GOSPEL IS A RELATIONAL STORY

'... so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

ROMANS 15.6 (NIV)

