



## Bible Study for Local Use

# Mutually Encouraged: Nurturing Right Relations Among People of Faith

### *Introduction*

From the beginning, the deep listening process of the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) has been rooted in scripture. Every listening group session began with Bible study.

In that same spirit, you will notice the prominence of scripture in the Transformational Aspirations video series being released over Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 on [anglican.ca/changingchurch](http://anglican.ca/changingchurch).

Each video has an accompanying Bible study for use in dioceses, parishes, and other Anglican contexts across the country.

We encourage repeated reading of the scripture passage out loud as you consider each question in turn. We also encourage open sharing, uncritical listening, and welcoming acceptance of each participant's contributions.

A new Bible study will be made available each month on [anglican.ca/changingchurch](http://anglican.ca/changingchurch), alongside the release of each video in the Transformational Aspirations series.



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### *Romans 1.8-17 (NRSV)*

- <sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.
- <sup>9</sup> For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel[a] of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers,
- <sup>10</sup> asking that by God’s will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you.
- <sup>11</sup> For I long to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift so that you may be strengthened—
- <sup>12</sup> or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.
- <sup>13</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you, as I have among the rest of the gentiles.
- <sup>14</sup> I am obligated both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish,
- <sup>15</sup> hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is God’s saving power for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.
- <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

### *Reflection*

Following in the way of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is never a solo enterprise. Rather, it is always about a web of interpersonal relations. All throughout the scriptures, we see how God calls people – often people from very different backgrounds and contexts – to journey together in the way of faith, to serve one another, and to take turns building each other up as we go.

We observe this principle expressed in St. Paul’s letter to the Romans and his desire to see and share and strengthen them, as well as to be encouraged by them and receive (“reap a harvest”) from their gifts. As a Jewish Christian, Paul knows that he has much to learn both from cross-cultural encounters (“both Greeks and barbarians”) and from experiencing different kinds of local expressions (“among the rest of the Gentiles”) of what faith in Jesus can look like. At the same time, he is aware of how the unique history and traditions of his own people and community can bring mutual benefit to them as well.

His confidence in the wideness and goodness of the Gospel opens him up to be able to recognize God’s Spirit at work in perhaps unexpected people and places as well – even at the heart of the Empire of Rome! Wherever we see “the righteousness of God” on display, we are called to encounter and to seek relationship there.



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*Questions for discussion*

1. How do you think it felt for the fledgling church in Rome to know that Paul was eager to learn and receive from them, just as much as he wanted to teach and share with them?
2. In what ways has your own faith been enriched by cross-cultural experiences of worship and devotion?
3. What does this scripture text tell us about the importance of seeking out and engaging in networks and partnerships across the breadth of the global Anglican Communion?
4. What can we learn from Paul's humble and receptive posture towards those who some might have considered 'others' in Rome that can inform how Canadian Anglicans relate to Christians of other denominations, and/or to people of different spiritual and religious paths?
5. Can you think of examples in your own part of the church where the call to "nurture right relationships with people of faith" is being, or could be, heard and acted on?
6. What kinds of support and assistance would make it more possible for these efforts to continue to bear fruit?

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