

Paul's Team
Colossians 4:7-18

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers^[c] at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

— Colossians 4:7-18 (ESV)

Tychicus—Paul's messenger

He was from Asia (Acts 20:4), a Greek, probably an early convert from Paul's first journey

Paul sent him to Ephesus (Eph. 6:21); to the Colossians; and to Titus, in Crete (Titus 3:12)—and perhaps other places as well.

Paul refers to him as the “beloved brother,” a trusted communicator.

His assignment: “that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts.”

This was not easily accomplished—but communication about the work of God was deemed so important that the effort was expended.

Tychicus was in a support role—and those roles are critical to success.

Onesimus—fugitive slave

Onesimus had apparently run away from Philemon; we don't know his story

He may have been converted in the house of Philemon, where there was a home church (Phlm. 2)

He became a fellow-worker and “child” of Paul

Our “faithful and beloved brother”—he was a great help to Paul and much loved

A decision was made that Onesimus must return to Philemon, with a letter from Paul, to be accountable for his actions.

Paul made the strongest imaginable appeal to Philemon to consider Onesimus as a brother and no longer a slave (v 16)

Onesimus was greatly used by God, and as a part of serving God, he took responsibility for some unresolved issues from his past.

Aristarchus—comrade in suffering

He was a Thessalonian (Acts 27:2)

Persecuted with Paul (and others) in Ephesus (Acts 19:29)

He travelled with Paul faithfully

He shared in his suffering—a faithful friend and committed co-worker for the Gospel.

Mark—reconciled and restored

Mark, also called, John went on the first missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas, but left the group early

Paul's unwillingness to include him on the second journey caused Paul and Barnabas (Mark's cousin) to separate (Acts 15:36-41)

Later, we do not know the circumstances, Mark was reunited with Paul in his work, and became a valuable and loved member of Paul's spiritual "family." (2 Tim. 4:11)

Justus—for whom God had a different plan

This may have been the candidate to take Judas' place who was *not* selected when the lots were cast (Acts 1:23-26)

Only Mark and Justus were Jewish. Paul's team was primarily Greek. Probably not what he was expecting when his ministry began.

Epaphras—strong in prayer

He was a Christian leader from Colossae who had joined Paul's team.

Much of his heart was with the Colossians, for whom he was always struggling in prayer.

He may have left family there.

Paul lifts up Epaphras to the Colossians (v13) —he "brags on him"—knowing how much that would mean to his friend.

Luke—the beloved physician

He joined Paul's team during the second journey (Acts 16:10—"we"), before they went into Greece

God used the beloved physician to give us his Gospel and the book of Acts—think of the loss if we did not have those books

When Luke joined with Paul, he had no idea what lay ahead. Possibly he thought his service would be primarily as a physician.

Demas—who did not stay the course

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.— 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul's last surviving letter

Greetings to the brothers and to Nympha...

Women (particularly Greek women) were extremely important in Paul's work and in the early Church. And still are.

And say to Archippus...

Archippus was a friend and associate of Philemon (Phlm. 2)

He had been given a ministry and was apparently wavering or delaying

His charge is our charge as well. We are all on the team.