



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Sending Epaphroditus

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The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians (60-62 A.D.), Paul is imprisoned (one of four Prison Letters, the others being Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) in Rome addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Philippi, the first founded by Paul in Europe. In this letter, Paul, having a fondness for the people of the church of Philippi, because of their faithfulness and generous nature, wanted to thank them for their gifts, letting them know why he was returning Epaphroditus to them, sharing his situation in prison, urging unity in church, and warning them against false teachers. While false doctrine had started to plague many of the churches, he wanted to provide encouragement for practical living and support for sound doctrine. While much of the letter deals with spiritual growth, the tone throughout is that there is joy in Christ and Paul rejoices in Christ being proclaimed regardless of his circumstance and that they also must conduct their lives, strive and suffer in and for Christ. Paul now sends Epaphroditus back to the Philippian Church. (Php 2:25-30 NASB)

“But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;” (1:25)

Epaphroditus was a balanced Christian. He was a brother in Christ, which means that he was part of the family and fellowship of believing men and women of the Gospel. He was a fellow worker, which means that his mission was to spread the gospel to the lost. He was a fellow soldier, meaning that he would be faithful and battle for the Gospel. He was a messenger and minister or servant from the Philippian church to Paul. Epaphroditus was a balanced Christian. Like Paul, Epaphroditus loved the fellow believers in the Philippian church.

“because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.” (2:26-27)

Epaphroditus was humble, self sacrificing, compassionate and submissive. He became so sick in his travels and service to Paul that without God’s mercy he would have died and Paul would have had great grief over such death. However, Paul says that Epaphroditus put his sickness aside and had more concern about the feelings and pain his fellow brothers and sisters in the Philippian regarding their concern and distress over him and wanted or longed to get back to them for this reason. Epaphroditus had a burden for others. Believers like Epaphroditus brought joy to Paul.

“Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.” (2:28-30)

Hold believers like Epaphroditus in high regard. Paul loved the Philippian church and developed a concern for them because their concern for his needs and for Epaphroditus’ sickness. So sending Epaphroditus back to the Philippian church would not only bring joy to them but would also bring great joy to him as well. Paul shares that the church was to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord with joy and to hold men like him in high regard because of his faithfulness and work in the Lord. The Philippian church body was a well balanced body that not only reflected a mission burden for the lost outside of their land but they also loved, valued and had a burden for their local body fellowship.

For Your Consideration:

- Are you a well balanced Christian? Are you a true fellow brother or sister in Christ; a fellow worker to share the Gospel to the lost; a fellow faithful soldier or warrior battling for the Gospel?
- Like Epaphroditus, are you burden for the need of others?
- Do you hold brothers and sisters in the faith, like Epaphroditus, in high regard?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44