

WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

PRISCILLA

Lee Venning

Motivation is difficult if we think we are the only ones pulling. We can serve alone briefly but long term we will burn out!

Priscilla and Aquila were a team. Paul commends Aquila and Priscilla as his “fellow workers” who risked their lives for him. Priscilla is usually mentioned first.

1. **Priscilla was a Disciple** - Acts 18:1-4, 18-19

Around 52 A.D. the Roman emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome. Priscilla and Aquila, migrated to the city of Corinth. God in his wisdom uses their profession to connect Priscilla and Aquila with Paul.

Priscilla and Aquila invited Paul into their home and let him stay with them. If Priscilla and Aquila did not know the Lord before, Paul’s stay would have left them in no doubt. No one could be anywhere near Paul for very long and not be affected by his passion for Jesus.

To really know the gospel and how we should live it we need to remain close to a person we know and trust to teach us the ways of God.

2. **Priscilla the Teacher** - Acts 18:24-26

Apollos sounds an impressive speaker. Aquila and Priscilla were impressed, but they detected a serious flaw in his preaching. Tactfully they made no attempt to correct him. They invited him home for lunch.

Gently and lovingly, they explained how the gospel of the Lord Jesus was the fulfilment of the Hebrew scriptures. What they learnt from Paul they passed on to Apollos. They multiplied themselves. The purpose of discipleship is multiplication. Disciples are meant to disciple. We were born to reproduce.

What Priscilla and Aquila did for Apollos is the norm. If you are not sure about something you hear in a sermon, don’t just accept it. (Acts 17:11)

3. **Priscilla the House Church Leader** - 1 Corinthians 16:19

Priscilla and Aquila left their home in Corinth and followed Paul to Ephesus. In both Corinth and then in Ephesus, their home became a church, a house church. It seems at some point they decided to move back to Rome. (Romans 16:3-5)

We may assume they became leaders within those churches (2 Timothy 4:19). Paul wanted to be remembered to them in the last hours of his life.

Their legacy was the model of ministry they demonstrated consistently, evangelism, discipleship and multiplication.

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WOMEN IN CONFLICT – EUODIA & SYNTYCHE

Eustace Mckinnon

Background Story

As you may recall, Paul had a vision calling him to preach in Macedonia. There was no synagogue in Philippi, but they heard there was a group of women gathered for prayer each Sabbath at the riverside. Paul and Timothy joined the women at the riverside, praying with them and teaching them. Lydia, one of the women, was saved along with her household, and as a result opened her home to Paul and Timothy and other believers. A church fellowship was formed. Paul ended up returning to Philippi multiple times to teach and encourage the believers there. Then, while he was imprisoned in Rome, he sent his letter to the Philippians. The theme of the letter is of joy, but he also touched on unity and humility. And then, he calls out Euodia and Syntyche.

The two women are only mentioned one short passage in the Bible: *I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.* (Philippians 4:2–3, NKJV)

Euodia and Syntyche

Euodia and Syntyche were two women involved in the building of the church in Philippi. They could have been part of that group of women who met at the river to pray that Paul met when he first arrived at Philippi (Acts 16:13–15). Or maybe they came along after that. The Bible provides us no background on them.

Everyone has their disagreements, but this one was obviously more than just a little argument. It was such that it was affecting the rest of the church, and word of their problems had reached all the way from Philippi to Rome. They never intended for their little disagreement to get out of hand, but it had, and now was affecting their entire church. The problem was that it's hard to fix a problem when you're part of the problem. Fortunately for everyone Paul found out and reached out. Although there is much in his letter, it appears he's following the common tactic of delivering bad news. You start off positive, you mention the problem, then you close with encouragement. (Philippians 1:27, 2:2–3, 4:6–7)

Unity among believers is a common theme in the Bible (Psalm 133:1; John 17:23; 1 Peter 3:8). Paul himself spoke about unity in several of his letters in 1 Corinthians 1:10. (Ephesians 4:11–13; Colossians 3:13–14). In fact, Paul's plea for addressing the problem was for each member of

the church at Philippi to be united in helping Euodia and Syntyche live peaceably with one other.

What Can We Learn?

Their example shows us that even those who have worked together for the cause of Christ can have disagreements. It also shows us the importance of treating one another with love, compassion, and longsuffering (Ephesians 4:31; John 13:34–35). A church warring with itself is in danger of losing its testimony to outsiders. Euodia and Syntyche needed to be “of the same mind in the Lord,” and the other church members were to do all that was necessary to heal the breach. They were all fellow-labourers in the Lord's work, and their names were all part of the book of life. Because the church is made up of sinners (albeit forgiven ones), there will be times when division occurs. In these cases, scripture gives instructions on how to work toward peace. Never does God's Word allow for gossip, arguing, and fighting over personal matters in the church. Instead, believers are to encourage one another as we prepare for Christ's return.

Even good, strong Christians have trouble getting along sometimes. We are human. It takes other loving, strong Christian friends to help get us back on track sometimes. We don't know what Euodia and Syntyche were arguing about, but what do know is that God did not want them to stay that way.

Let's use Euodia and Syntyche as a banner, a reminder that sometimes we need help to fix our relationships. See them as a reminder that God wants us to be at peace when we can be (1 Thessalonians 5:13; Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14). Be willing to make the effort to improve your relationships where you can. It's the effort that takes courage and brotherly love, sitting back and ignoring it only feeds our self-interest. We should be looking out for each other.

Conclusion

Is there someone in your life who was once dear to you but now you are at odds with? If so, have you humbled yourself, asking God if the problem lies with you, and if so, to help make it right? It may be that you're right, but being right can be lonely if you hold it over others. Whenever you're in the middle of the situation, take it to Him to help you sort it out and reach a reconciliation.

In these days of so much conflict, we need to stand together with our sisters (brothers) in Christ. We need to work together for the good of our Lord. Then and only then, can we find that peace that we're seeking.