

## **Road Trip Devotion - Romans 16:7-11, 13**

by Tony Kafka, Growth Ministries Pastor

*“Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives. They have been in prison with me. They are leaders among the apostles. They became believers in Christ before I did.*

*Greet Ampliatus. I love him as a brother in the Lord.*

*Greet Urbanus. He works together with me in serving Christ. And greet my dear friend Stachys.*

*Greet Apelles. Even though he was put to the test, he remained faithful as one who belonged to Christ. Greet those who live in the house of Aristobulus.*

*Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet the believers who live in the house of Narcissus.*

*Greet Rufus. He is a choice believer in the Lord. And greet his mother. She has been like a mother to me too.” (Romans 16:7-11, 13; NIV)*

We can learn a lot about Paul, as a person and leader, from this passage that looks like a Facebook page. Previously in Romans, Paul’s words reveal that he was an intellectual. He also was powerful in a theological discussion. He was passionate about presenting the message of Jesus.

Here, at the end of the letter, we see that he connected with people. The people he has “friended” on his homepage tell us something about what should be truly important – relationships. Some of these he knew by personal contact; others because they were connected to his friends. Some people were actually relatives: Andronicus and Junias (verse 7) and Herodion (verse 11). Others were like family: Rufus and his mother (verse 13). “She has been like a mother to me too.”

Why would the mother of Rufus be like a mother to Paul? Maybe their families were always close and she took an interest in Paul from the time he was young. Paul may have needed a second mother because his mother had already passed away. When Paul was a young man, he went away to school to study under the great teacher Gamaliel. Perhaps Rufus’ family took him in at that critical stage of life. Near the age of 40 years, Paul became a follower of Jesus Christ. He even started to go by his Greek name “Paul” instead of his Hebrew given name, “Saul.” This would be contrary to his family upbringing and education. He could have become estranged from his own family, at which time Rufus’ mother became like a mother to him. The changes that come in a lifetime create new opportunities for relationships.

This chapter shows the church as a family. Celebrate relationships that last a lifetime. Happily embrace new relationships that come with being a Christian. Open your heart to those around you. Invite others to share a meal with you. Send an email or card to a fellow believer who is like family to you.