

# Team Paul

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you very much Sabina. Good afternoon everyone. As Paul said, my name is Ian and I have the privilege of taking you through this passage of Colossians this afternoon. Do you ever listen to other people's telephone conversations?

Now before you say, oh no, we never do that. Think of a situation where you're on a train and you're on the train and you're reading a book or you're doing the crossword or you're watching a phone on your tablet and someone's phone rings.

It's, hello, I'm on a train. And they go on, although they're on a train in a very public place, they go on in quite a loud voice carrying out the conversation with whoever they're talking to.

And it's almost impossible to concentrate on anything else because they're speaking loudly and you're kind of interested in what they have to say anyway. And so your book or crossword or whatever has to wait for a few minutes and you hear about their domestic situation.

Or about their business or whatever else it is, they tell you a little bit about it. But you're only hearing one side.

[ 1 : 07 ] You're only hearing what the person there says. You don't really know what the background is. You don't know what the other person's saying. And you end up perhaps speculating, well what is the situation here?

What's going on that I can't make out because I can't hear both sides? When we come to the end of books like Colossians where Paul's writing, we get in that kind of situation a bit.

Because Paul writes about lots of people, lots of names that Sabina's read to us. And we don't know an awful lot about them. Some of them we know a bit. Some of them we know nothing apart from what's here.

And we're probably quite curious, well what is the background? Why have they got instruction about what happens if Mark comes to them? What is the task that Archippus has to complete that Paul's so keen the church encourages him in?

And so on. And we just, in some ways, we don't know. Now it is tempting to speculate and I probably will speculate a bit as I go along. But it's also important, I think, to try and take a step back.

[ 2 : 08 ] And to think, how does this fit in with Paul's work and with the work of the Church of Colossae? Because we're learning about people who are with Paul and people at Colossae.

If you like, Team Paul and Team Colossae. And as I was thinking about this passage, what struck me is it tells us a lot about working as a team.

Now we can say our church is like a team. We're a group of people who have been brought together. We have a common purpose and we want to serve and to work together.

So what can we learn about working as a team from what Paul writes to us here? And what can we learn about our individual roles within it? So we're going to look at the team at Team Dynamics.

And we're going to look at individuals at Team Players. What about Team Dynamics? Some of you will recognise these two gentlemen here. Some of you probably won't.

[ 3 : 03 ] They're both football managers. One is manager of a team that at the moment is clearly together and united, where the star players are being allowed to express themselves and the others are supporting them very well.

And the team is being pretty successful on the whole. The other is the manager of a team where there seem to be problems in the dressing room. It looks as if not all the players are really behind the manager.

Some players are being played out of position and don't seem very happy with that. The team is not doing very well and is not being united as a team.

Now, if you look at the two photos, you could probably guess which is which. On the left is Oli Gunnar Sokjaer, who is the manager of Manchester United, at least to the end of the season. And on the right is Maurizio Sarri.

I've lost the name. Thank you very much. Maurizio Sarri. He's the manager of Chelsea, at least until this afternoon. If he gets beaten this afternoon, he might not be around very much longer. Two teams, both full of very good players and yet a lot of differences in the way they're managed and in the way things are working.

[ 4 : 20 ] Team dynamics really matter. Are the team together? Are they being given a chance to express their abilities? Are they being successful and working for one another?

Well, when it comes to Team Paul, I think we can say, by and large, this was a team which really worked together. And we can learn quite a lot from it about the dynamics that make up a good team and perhaps particularly if we're thinking in a Christian context, about the dynamics we would like to see in our church as we serve the Lord Jesus together.

So four things I want to highlight, and then we will look at some of the team players in a little bit more detail. So the first thing that's very evident, as Paul writes, is the love that he has.

He talks three times about people being dear brothers, but throughout it you can sense these are people, all of them, who he has a great affection for, who he really cares about.

Someone once asked one of Billy Graham's associates, someone who'd been with the Billy Graham organization for a very long time, why is it that Dr. Graham has a team that stays around and that seems so united and so happy?

[ 5 : 39 ] And Billy Graham's associates replied, love. Whatever the situation he and the team find themselves in, Billy Graham leads with love.

What a great testimony that is. The thing that drove Billy Graham was not just the success of the team, not just even preaching the gospel.

It was having a love for his team and having a love for all those he went out to reach. How important it is for us that in our team, in Team Bruntsfield, we are characterized by a love for one another.

Jesus said, all men will know you are my disciples if you love one another. And I wonder if people came into our church and they looked around and they talked to us for a few minutes, would one of the things that really struck them be the love that we have for each other?

Now I have to say a lot of people come into the church and feel really welcome and feel really loved, and that is tremendous. But let's challenge ourselves. Do we really show the love of Christ to one another day by day and as we work together?

[ 6 : 52 ] Very important of working as a team is that we have love for one another. In the business context, it might be you get on, you're friends, but in the church it's very much we have the love of Christ and we share that with each other.

So that was a very important team dynamic for Paul. Second one I would suggest I've called loyalty. Now Paul actually talks about faithfulness. He talks about a faithful minister of Eutychicus, for example, in verse 7.

Faithfulness, loyalty, they're much the same kind of thing. So Paul is saying, here are people you can depend on. They're really bought into the team and to the work of the team and they are loyal to it and they will do everything they can to help it to succeed.

And why are Paul's team loyal to him? Well, perhaps partly the love that we've talked about, but it's their loyalty to the Lord Jesus that is the really important thing.

He is a faithful minister, says Paul of Eutychicus. In other words, he's a faithful servant of Jesus. Very important in our background, in our church, in whatever Christian teams we're in, that there's loyalty, that there's faithfulness.

[ 8 : 11 ] Yes, loyalty and faithfulness to one another, but above all, loyalty and faithfulness to Jesus. A desire to serve him and to live for him in all circumstances at all times and that his kingdom may be further, that people may come to know him and may grow in their faith.

Loyalty, faithfulness is really important for Christians. Novel of Christians who are very keen for a while and then think they're a little bit difficult and you find they're not that faithful in their service in the hard times.

God wants us to recognise his love for us and for that to be expressed in our love for him, but also in our faithfulness, in our loyalty to the Lord Jesus and to his gospel.

Third team dynamic I've called collaboration. It is working together. Now that is one that comes out in several ways as we go through Paul's team here.

There are those who are working together. There are those who are chained together with Paul who are prisoners alongside him. We already talked about Epaphras, this man who is doing this tremendous work of prayer.

[ 9 : 27 ] That was his part in the work of the church, particularly in Colossae. People working together for the gospel, for the Lord Jesus, and together making a difference.

Each had their role, each knew what their role was, and each was working together to help the others in the team and to move forward the work that Paul was doing, the missionary work that he was engaged in.

Teamwork, collaboration, really important in a church. Perhaps I can make an observation that's been in my mind for a while about churches. Because I think when you've got a small church, a relatively small church, it is much easier for everyone to play their part and to feel they're really part of things and are responsible for the work of the church.

As a church gets bigger, and by the grace of God, our church has been growing in recent years, there is a danger that people lose that sense of ownership, of having responsibility for the work of the church.

We all have our own bits that we do. We're in a small group. Perhaps we're in some areas of service, but perhaps lose sight of the big picture. Let me give you an example. If you've got a small church and they say, we're having a church cleaning day.

[ 10 : 47 ] We want everyone to come and help us clean the church. You will invariably get a really good attendance at that. People will come together. They'll enjoy the time of fellowship, and they'll enjoy working together in a practical way, serving the Lord Jesus.

Get a big church, and people might say, well, I'm quite busy that day. I'm not sure if I can manage. There will be other people to do it. I don't think I'll go.

Or the prayer meeting. Many small churches, even though there aren't that many people in them, if you see their prayer meeting, everyone or almost everyone is there.

Move to a big church, and we're not alone in this. You find it's a relatively small proportion of the church who attend prayer gatherings. And again, people are saying, having a really busy week, I could do with an evening in.

There will be other people there. And you really lose something when you do that, and if that's the kind of attitude that we have.

[ 11 : 49 ] All of us have responsibilities if we're part of the church, to work together for the church, and to glorify God through that. And yes, we have our individual things that we do, and they're important, let's not neglect them.

But there are some things where the church needs to come together, and we need all to feel we've got a responsibility. I should be involved in this. God wants me to serve him, and to build up his church in collaboration, in teamwork with the other members.

So collaboration, very important. And then the final thing Paul talks about is encouragement.

Actually, he calls it comfort. But I think, again, much the same thing.

Comfort, encouragement, refreshment, and all with the same idea. And this is the thought that we've got brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus, and that they are able and willing to support and to encourage one another, and to help each of us to keep going for Jesus.

In all our lives, there are discouragements, there are difficulties, there are problems. And as a church, we need to be supporting one another. And when we are going through difficult times, be a comfort and an encouragement.

[ 13 : 02 ] Paul was in prison at this point, so comfort from these people is very important to them. Whatever our circumstances, comfort one another. And when we see someone doing something and doing it to their best of their ability, using the gifts that God has given them, give them that word of encouragement, of support, to keep going and to keep serving the Lord Jesus.

Four key dynamics that I think should be part of our church, of any team that is serving God. Love, loyalty, collaboration, and encouragement.

Now, how does that express itself in the people we're looking at? Well, as I said, there are effectively two teams here. Most of it is Team Paul. There are eight people there. We'll talk briefly about Team Colossae.

There are two there, although you could argue that Onesimus and Epaphras should be in that column rather than the left. But let's keep them as they are, because that's the way that Paul describes them. And what I want to do in Team Paul is to take each of the eight people very briefly and to say of the four things that we've looked at, which of these boxes are that person tick and why?

I've read in the slide here on this side mainly to get a bit more space. So some are talked about as being dear, being loved. Some are faithful. Some provide support. They're working practically, collaborating with Paul.

[14:21] And some provide comfort. So let's just go down the list and we'll find out a bit about each of them. So the first one is Tychicus. Tychicus is the only one you'll find who ticks three of the four boxes.

He's loyal, he's faithful, and he's hardworking. I used to think of Tychicus as being like Paul's postman. If Paul had a letter to send to a church, then he would get Tychicus to take it, whether it was to Colossae or to Ephesus or whoever else Paul was writing to.

And of course it was very important, particularly in those days because you couldn't rely on a postal service. The only reliable way to make sure your communication got across was to send someone with it and they delivered it personally.

And that was Tychicus. But Tychicus, when you look at it, was far more than that. He wasn't just someone who delivered letters.

I think he'd more accurately be described as Paul's ambassador. He's someone who Paul sent to represent him in other places and to tell them about what was going on and to encourage them and no doubt also to report back to Paul about what he saw.

[15:35] Tychicus was very much part of Paul's A-team, if you like. We were familiar with people like Timothy and Titus. I think we put Tychicus in the same kind of category.

He's someone who Paul could absolutely depend on and know that he would carry out whatever Paul asked him to do. So we come across Tychicus first in Acts chapter 20 and he's part of a group of people who are heading with Paul from Greece along to Jerusalem and they're taking a gift with them.

Tychicus, it says, was from the province of Asia. So it may all have been from Ephesus or somewhere like that, perhaps even Colossae, but he was someone who Paul felt was a good ambassador to bring with him to Jerusalem.

He took the letter to the Ephesians, perhaps at the same time as Colossians, but certainly he was the person who carried the letter to the Ephesians. And again, Paul says, he'll tell you everything that's going on.

He'll encourage you. When we come to the book of Titus, we find that Titus is in Crete and Paul is really keen for Titus to come and to see him. Now Titus was a real troubleshooter.

[16:40] Lots of problems in the church in Crete that we can read about in the book of Titus. And Paul said, I'd really like you to come and see me, but I need to send someone else first. And Tychicus was one of those who was mentioned.

So in other words, he was someone you could send into a difficult situation and you would know that he could deal with it. Last time Tychicus is mentioned chronologically is in 2 Timothy.

Paul is very near the end of his life. He's in prison and he knows he's facing death. And Tychicus has been with him almost to the end, but Paul has sent him to Ephesus.

Perhaps there was a problem in the church in Ephesus. Paul knew he needed to send someone there. Who did he send? It was Tychicus. So here's someone who Paul knew was reliable, would be able to go and to relay messages effectively to the church and be a real encouragement to them.

He was, said Paul, a dear brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant. Great if we can have people like Tychicus who are absolutely reliable and we know if something needs done and perhaps something's a bit difficult or a bit sensitive, we can rely on them.

[17:57] They're not going to let us down. Great to have people like that and we do have people like that in our church here. Second person is Onesimus.

If you said about Onesimus in Colossians 4, you wouldn't really get to know very much about him. In some ways what Paul says about him is similar to what he says about Tychicus because he says he's dear and he's faithful.

But we know about Onesimus mainly from another book in the New Testament, the book of Philemon. And the background of Onesimus was Onesimus was a slave. He ran away from Philemon, perhaps stole some things as he went and he ended up alongside Paul.

Now probably Paul was in Rome, it's not certain, but probably Paul was in Rome so Onesimus had found his way from Colossae to Rome which is quite a considerable distance. While he was there, he'd become a Christian by the grace of God.

He had accepted the Lord Jesus as his savior and Paul had looked after him and was obviously teaching him about the faith. And Onesimus is now going back to Colossae.

[ 19 : 09 ] He's going back with Tychicus, again a sensitive mission that Tychicus is entrusted with. They're going back to Colossae. They're going back to Philemon, Onesimus' master.

And they're not terribly sure what the response is going to be. Paul writes this wonderful letter of Philemon as he lays out and lays it on thick and how great it would be if Philemon accepted Onesimus not just as a slave, but as a brother in the Lord Jesus.

But perhaps still as they went, Onesimus would be thinking, well, will he do that? Or am I in for real trouble? How significant then is it that Paul describes Onesimus as a faithful and dear brother? He's not just sending back a slave who's done Philemon wrong. He's not just asking for mercy for someone who really doesn't deserve it or in some ways that might have been true of Onesimus. Rather, he's saying to Philemon and to the church at Colossae, here's someone who in the short time he's been a Christian has really proved himself. He's someone I've come to have a deep affection for.

[ 20 : 22 ] He's a dear brother. But he is also someone who's reliable, who is faithful, who you can trust. The name Onesimus means useful.

And one of the things Paul does in the letter to Philemon, he does a bit of a word play on how useful Onesimus is going to be for Philemon. So he is someone who's not a core member of team Paul, like Tychicus, not someone who's been with him throughout his travels, and yet he's a trophy of God's grace.

And he has become, through knowing Jesus and truth, the discipling of Paul, someone who is loved and who is faithful. Wonderful, isn't it, when people come to know Jesus and they have a real joy in their faith and the things they've done in the past, they might be terrible or they might think they're terrible, and yet their lives have been transformed by knowing Jesus.

Again, we have people like that in our church. And for all of us, however much we may have failed, however bad we might think things have been in our lives, we can look at Onesimus and we can take encouragement that it is people like Onesimus that Jesus died for, people like you and me, and that none of us has done too much, too many bad things to experience God's grace.

Jesus died on the cross for all those who will trust in him, will put their faith in him, and will come to him for forgiveness and eternal life. What an encouragement Onesimus is.

[ 21 : 54 ] Number three is Aristarchus, and we'll be a little bit brief with the others. Aristarchus gets two texts. He's a comfort to Paul as one of his fellow Jews. We'll come back to that in a minute.

And he's a support for Paul. He's a fellow prisoner. Something very interesting here. If you read the book of Philemon, which is probably written at the same time, Paul talks about someone who's his fellow prisoner.

But that person he talks about in Philemon is Epaphras. He doesn't mention in his letter to Philemon that Aristarchus is a fellow prisoner.

And conversely, he doesn't mention this letter, that Epaphras is a fellow prisoner. So what's going on? Well, it is speculation, but I find it quite attractive. Some people think that the situation was that Paul had been arrested.

Paul was in prison, and he had been arrested by the Roman state. And these two men, these two fine first century Christians, Aristarchus and Epaphras, had volunteered to be in prison alongside him.

[ 22 : 59 ] So perhaps taking turns, which would explain why you get one mention in one place and one in the other. Don't know if that's true, but if it is, isn't it a tremendous example of Christians supporting one another?

One of us is in trouble. they need some help. What do you do? Someone else goes along and they sit alongside them and they provide the support that they need.

When people in our church are going through times of difficulty, how good are we at sitting alongside them and supporting them and empathizing with them and helping them through their time of problem?

That's how Aristarchus. We'll come back to the comfort section in a minute. Mark. You know the name Mark. Mark wrote a gospel. You probably also know that Mark was someone who went on Paul's first missionary journey with them.

Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church in Antioch and Mark went alongside them, but he didn't last very long. When it appears that going got a bit difficult, Mark decided he didn't want to keep going with Paul and Barnabas and he headed back to Jerusalem.

[ 24 : 12 ] And Paul was pretty upset about that. When Paul and Barnabas came back and they reported to the church in Jerusalem, they were going to go out again on the missionary journey and Barnabas said, let's take Mark with us.

And Paul said, in effect, over my dead body, he's not coming with us. And they had such a sharp fallout that actually Paul and Barnabas ended going their separate ways.

In some ways that turned out to be a good thing because the gospel went in two directions rather than one. But Mark was someone who had really hurt and had really upset Paul.

And yet here we find Mark is part of Team Paul. And if we fast forward to 2 Timothy, written quite a lot later, Paul has a really strong commendation of Mark as someone who is really useful, who is really helpful to him.

So Mark had gone wrong. He turned back and in his Christian life we might say he was a backslider. And yet now he has been restored, he is following Jesus and he will continue to serve him.

[ 25 : 23 ] Don't know what it was that the instruction that Paul sent to the church at Colossae about Mark, perhaps it was that they should receive him warmly because he was again following Jesus.

Great to know, isn't it, that we have a God who gives second chances. When we fail, when we don't do all that we should for him, when our love grows a bit cold and we're not really following Jesus the way we should, yet there is always a way back.

And Mark was able to go from someone who Paul would have nothing to do with to being one of Paul's closest companions at the end, someone he found really useful. If you've been in a situation like Mark where perhaps you feel I've failed as a Christian, I haven't done what I should have for Jesus, take encouragement.

God always gives us another opportunity and is happy to welcome us back and to have us continuing to serve him. Jesus' justice.

Know nothing about Jesus' justice apart from the fact that he's one of Paul's fellow Jews. That's the only thing we know about that Paul tells us here that he is one of the three Jews among Paul's fellow workers.

[ 26 : 40 ] And these three Jews are a real comfort to Paul. I think perhaps they're a comfort to Paul partly because Paul has had some fallout with the Judaizers in the Christian church, even people like Peter when they were a bit too strong on the Jewish side of things and on circumcision and so on.

But now he's got these three men who are with him and they're enjoying a good relationship.

Perhaps also takes comfort from the fact that with these three men he can talk about some things about the Jewish heritage that he perhaps couldn't with some of the Gentile Christians.

They'd put behind them the Jewish religion and all that that involved but they knew the Old Testament they understood the background and with Paul were able to be a real comfort.

Perhaps just a slightly bit in a church like this there are people who have been here a long time and know the church has changed an awful lot. There are lots of people who are new and it's great to have everyone with us.

Perhaps those who have been here a long time we can encourage one another as we think back yes we think back to things that were in the past and they were good but also encourage ourselves how God has been working and we can look back over many years and we can see that God has blessed our church he has grown it and together we can rejoice in where we were and where we are now.

[ 28 : 03 ] So that was I think Jesus Justice, Mark and Aristarchus why they were a particular encouragement to Paul. Not much to go now Epaphras Epaphras already mentioned this morning I've only given him one take but actually if we went back to chapter 1 Paul describes Epaphras in

almost exactly the same way as he describes Tychicus he's a dear brother he's a faithful servant he's a fellow he's a faithful Christian he's a fellow servant for the Lord Jesus.

Epaphras was the man who had established the church in Colossae he was the one who had brought the gospel to that place to begin with not Paul Paul had never been to Colossae and now Epaphras for whatever reason was with Paul and what was he doing he was praying.

We're told nothing about Epaphras in this passage apart from his prayers. He couldn't be with his church for whatever reason but he hadn't forgotten it he was fervent in his prayers for it.

And as Paul pointed out to us what great things it is he's praying for he's wrestling in prayer can you see the work and the effort that's in that he's praying you may stand firm in the will of God mature and fully assured.

Isn't it wonderful to have prayer warriors? There are some people in this church I know who are prayer warriors. They may not appear to be active in the work of the church they're not up front like some of us they're not very visible but they pray and their prayers would be me and probably many others here to shame.

[ 29 : 40 ] they really get down to the work of prayer and for praying for God's people and for God's work in a way that few of us do. Great if we were all prayer warriors like that.

If we all had this deep desire to lay hold of God and to pray for one another and to constantly pray and as Paul said it's not just for those who are ill or those who are doing special things it's for all of us that we may stand firm that we may be mature and fully assured.

Going towards the end Luke gets two-taked Luke is loved and I put him as a sport for Paul Luke I think was Paul's doctor. Paul had some kind of problem probably a physical problem he described as as thorn in his flesh in 2 Corinthians and it looks as if Luke who travelled with Paul broadly from when he went to Philippi until the end it looks as if Luke was in a sense his personal physician he was playing his role in the team and he was someone Paul really loved and respected as our dear friend and of course Luke was the author of the third gospel.

Moving on quickly for the sake of time Demas Demas notices nothing that Paul can say here about Demas he doesn't even say our dear friends Luke and Demas he just says and Demas at the end what do we know about Demas?

Well we read him about him two other places in the New Testament in Philemon probably written at the same time as this he's described as a fellow worker along with lots of others and then in 2 Timothy Paul says to Timothy Demas has forsaken me he loved the present world now quite what that means I'm not sure did it mean that Demas had gone off to the flesh parts of Rome or did it mean that when he came to the crancher he was maybe having to be martyred for his faith Demas drew back we don't know but in 2 Timothy there's a problem with Demas perhaps in Colossians there's a hint of a problem with Demas Paul can find nothing good to say about him how sad it would be if there were some of us if someone was writing about the church at Brunfield and they mentioned our name there would be nothing positive they could say about us no sign of God's grace no evidence of working hard for the Lord Jesus we're just here and maybe we're just hanging on and not that often here either let's not be like

[ 32 : 12 ] Demas let's seek to be wholehearted for Jesus and to work faithfully beside those in the church our time is rapidly running out let me just talk briefly about Team Colossae we have Nympha Nympha had a church in her house she probably wasn't the leader of the church knowing the way that Paul set up churches but she was the most important person in the church she provided the hospitality she provided the encouragement the only woman mentioned in this chapter but clearly a woman of great substance both in physical terms which she had a house the church could meet in but also spiritually that she was the one who'd provided the church facilities and know that was a great encouragement and strength within the church and Archippus Archippus is a man with a mission Paul says see to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord possibly Archippus was Philemon's son we could gather that in the book of Philemon possibly he was fulfilling the road Epaphras previously had in leading the church in Colossae slightly speculative but there's some task that Paul is encouraging the church at Colossae to encourage Archippus in again good if we can encourage one another in the work that God has given us to do

I've been through a lot fairly quickly there and let me just finish by thinking about what kind of people are we in the church what kind of a person am I so there are four groups of people which broadly tie in with the people we've met there are faithful servants there are the people like Tychicus or like Epaphras who are working hard for God who are faithful dependable loyal and you

know that you can trust them to do God's work am I like that can people really depend on me as someone who is reliable in the service of the Lord there are prayer warriors I've mentioned that we have prayer warriors at Bruntsfield great if more of us could be that and could be really in prayer for each other and for God's work trophies of grace I'm thinking in this are Onesimus and Mark people who have gone wrong and God has worked in their lives and brought them to know and to follow Jesus in one sense all of us who know Jesus are trophies of grace none of us by ourselves have any great merit but great to be encouraged particularly by those who have recently come to know the Lord Jesus and the work that he has done in their lives and continues to do in all of our lives and perhaps for some we're not even at that point yet that we haven't actually come to the point of trusting in Jesus or recognizing his death on the cross for us and the forgiveness that that brings if you're in that position I urge you to consider what Jesus has done what he can do and what you need from him and you too can be one of these trophies of grace and let's make sure we're not like Demas I've called him a hanger on maybe slightly unfair on him but you do get people in churches that are hangers on they're there irregularly they don't really get involved in things and they're not growing in their faith let's make sure none of us are like that that we are committed to the Lord Jesus that we want to follow him and to grow and to live for him

I'm sorry I've taken a bit longer than I probably should have but let's pray together now to finish Our Father we thank you for your word to us this morning we thank you for these people who Paul brings before us in some ways just names from a long time ago but in other ways people we can really identify with and who have so much to teach us today we pray that all of us may be trophies of grace that we may know your grace in our lives that we may have a relationship with the Lord Jesus as our saviour as the one who died for us we pray that you will help us to be faithful to be servants of the Lord Jesus and to live for him help us in our prayer life that it may be real and it may be fervent that we may wrestle in prayer that we may be prayer warriors and help us to avoid becoming hangers on to becoming becoming those about whom there is nothing that could be said positively about our Christian life keep that flame of love in our hearts and help us to follow Jesus faithfully and to serve him we thank you for our time together we thank you for our worship and we commit ourselves to you now in the name of the Lord Jesus

Amen