

Model Partners

Introduction

From the very beginning of the letter to the Philippians Paul has been speaking about gospel partnership, a partnership which he had enjoyed with the Philippians “from the first day until now” (1vs5). He is thankful for them and longs to see them continue in gospel partnership, both through their personal growth in the gospel and through their commitment to live in a way that is worthy of the gospel. Paul wants them (and us) to be “like-minded”, to have “the same love” and to be “one in spirit and purpose”, eschewing “selfish ambition” and “conceit”, to act “in humility” and to serve “the interests of others”. In order to motivate the Philippians to live in this way, Paul first sets the example of Christ before them (2vs5-11). He then refers to his own example and to that of Timothy and Epaphroditus. It is this example which forms the substance of Philippians 2vs19-30.

Study Questions

(These questions should be answered from the text)

Read Philippians 2vs19-30.

1. Why did Paul want to send Timothy to the Philippians?

2. How does Paul describe Timothy's attitude? What is surprising about this description?

3. How has Timothy proved himself to be other person centered?
4. What words does Paul use to describe Epaphroditus?
5. Why was Paul keen to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi?
6. What does this teach us about Paul and Epaphroditus attitude to the Philippians?
7. How were the Philippians to treat Epaphroditus on his return? Why?

Think it Through

1. What can we learn about gospel partnership from Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus?