

Philemon 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier,
and to the church in thy house:

Analysis

And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier—Ἀπφία (Apphia, likely Philemon's wife) is ἀδελφή (adelphē, sister). Ἀρχιππος (Archippos, Archippus—possibly their son or local pastor) is συστρατιώτης (systratiōtēs, fellow soldier), military metaphor for gospel ministry (2 Timothy 2:3-4, Philippians 2:25). Colossians 4:17 mentions Archippus's ministry requiring exhortation to fulfill. Paul widens the appeal: not just Philemon privately but his household publicly.

And to the church in thy house (καὶ τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ, kai tē kat oikon sou ekklēsia)—the congregation meeting in Philemon's home becomes audience and witnesses. Paul's strategy: public letter makes private forgiveness a community issue, applying gospel pressure. Receiving Onesimus as brother isn't Philemon's personal preference but Christian obligation before the watching church. Early house churches meant no separation between private property and public ministry.

Historical Context

First-century Christianity lacked dedicated buildings until the third century. Believers met in homes of wealthier members (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15). These οἶκος ἐκκλησίαι (oikos ekklēsiai, house churches) typically numbered 30-50 people—the size Philemon's house could accommodate. The domestic setting made Onesimus's restoration both personal (family) and public (church) matter.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Is your home a place of gospel hospitality hosting believers for worship, fellowship, and ministry?
2. How do you view Christian ministry—as peaceful service or as spiritual warfare requiring "fellow soldiers"?
3. What role does the church community play in mediating personal conflicts and holding individuals accountable to gospel living?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	Ἀπφία	τῇ	ἀγαπητῇ,	καὶ	Ἀρχίππῳ	τῷ	συστρατιώτῃ
And	Apphia	G3588	to our beloved	And	Archippus	G3588	fellow soldier
G2532	G682		G27	G2532	G751		G4961
ἡμῶν	καὶ	τῇ	κατ' οἶκόν	σου	ἐκκλησίᾳ		
our	And	G3588	in	house	thy	to the church	
G2257	G2532		G2596	G3624	G4675	G1577	

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 4:17 (Parallel theme): And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Romans 16:5 (Love): Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Philippians 2:25 (Parallel theme): Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Colossians 4:15 (Parallel theme): Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

1 Corinthians 16:19 (Parallel theme): The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

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