

Philippians 2:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 (Ἄναγκαιον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτourγὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Anankaion de hēgēsamēn Epaphroditon ton adelphon kai synergon kai systratiōtēn mou, hymōn de apostolon kai leitourgon tēs chreias mou, pemptai pros hymas)—Paul introduces Epaphroditus with five titles showing relationships:

1. adelphon ("brother")
2. synergon ("co-worker")
3. systratiōtēn ("fellow-soldier")
4. apostolon ("messenger/apostle")
5. leitourgon ("minister, servant").

Anankaion hēgēsamēn ("I considered it necessary") indicates urgency. Synergon ("co-worker") shows ministry partnership. Systratiōtēn ("fellow-soldier") uses military metaphor for spiritual warfare. Apostolon hymōn ("your apostle/messenger") means Philippian-commissioned delegate (not apostle in Paul's sense). Leitourgon tēs chreias mou ("minister of my need") shows Epaphroditus brought Philippians' financial support (4:18).

After Timothy (vv. 19-24), Paul commends Epaphroditus (vv. 25-30) as another Christ-hymn exemplar—risking life for others (v. 30).

Historical Context

Epaphroditus traveled from Philippi to Rome (800+ miles, dangerous journey) carrying the Philippians' gift to Paul. Ancient travel was slow, expensive, and perilous (bandits, shipwreck, illness). Churches commissioned delegates to represent them—Epaphroditus was Philippi's ambassador. He fell seriously ill in Rome (v. 27), possibly from travel hardships or ministry exertion. Paul sends him back with this letter.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Which of the five titles (brother, co-worker, fellow-soldier, messenger, minister) best describes your relationships in ministry?
2. How does the military metaphor ('fellow-soldier,' *systratiōtēn*) shape your view of Christian life?
3. Who has 'ministered to your wants' (*leitourgon tēs chreias*) sacrificially, and how have you honored them?

Interlinear Text

Ἄναγκαιον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ
it necessary Yet I supposed Epaphroditus G3588 brother and
G316 G1161 G2233 G1891 G80 G2532

συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου ὑμῶν δὲ
companion in labour and fellowsoldier my your Yet
G4904 G2532 G4961 G3450 G5216 G1161

ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου πέμψαι
messenger and he that ministered G3588 wants my to send
G652 G2532 G3011 G5532 G3450 G3992

πρὸς ὑμᾶς
to you
G4314 G5209

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 4:18 (Parallel theme): But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Colossians 1:7 (Parallel theme): As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

1 Corinthians 3:9 (Parallel theme): For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Philippians 4:3 (Parallel theme): And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Proverbs 25:13 (Parallel theme): As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Philemon 1:24 (Parallel theme): Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Hebrews 3:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Colossians 4:11 (Parallel theme): And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

1 Thessalonians 3:2 (Parallel theme): And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

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