

PRISCILLA: CALLED TO MINISTER

Lesson Scripture: Acts 18:1-26; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19

Focus Scripture: Acts 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; Romans 16:3-4

Key Verses: Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
Romans 16:3-4 (NRSV)

ACTS 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; ROMANS 16:3-4 (NRSV) **Acts 18:1-3**

1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,

3 and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers.

18-21

18 After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow.

19 When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews.

20 When they asked him to stay longer, he declined;

21 but on taking leave of them, he said, "I will return to you, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

24-26

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures.

25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus,

ACTS 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; ROMANS 16:3-4 (KJV) **Acts 18:1-3**

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

18-21

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

24-26

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

though he knew only the baptism of John.

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.

Romans 16:3-4

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus,

4 and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Romans 16:3-4

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

KEY TERMS

- **Tanakh** – The Hebrew Bible included the Torah (first five books of the Bible), and the historical, prophetic, and poetic writings known by Christians as the Old Testament.
- **Priscilla** – A Latin name meaning *ancient*.
- **Aquila** – A Latin name meaning *eagle*.
- **Corinth** – Large city in the Roman Empire with large shipping industry, and known for sexual immorality.
- **Apollo** – A Greek and Roman god whose worship includes temple prostitutes.
- **Sarcophagus** – A stone coffin.

INTRODUCTION

Ministry teams comprised of husbands and wives began during the first century. In today's lesson Priscilla and Aquila worked

together at secular and religious jobs. They made goat hair tents, which were commonly used for housing. Both studied the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible. Women were not usually given opportunity to teach the scriptures. However, Paul lived with Priscilla and Aquila. Paul's teachings would include both of them. Paul would show from the writing contained in the Tanakh, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Priscilla and Aquila were attentive students who gained enough knowledge that they were able to teach others. Their joint ministry so impressed Paul that he left the Corinthian teaching in their hands. The eighteen months spent with Paul enabled Priscilla and Aquila to teach Apollos, who was a persuasive preacher and instrumental in developing new churches.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

Acts 18:1-3

On his second missionary journey,

Paul traveled from Athens to Corinth. He met two tent makers, Priscilla and Aquila. Emperor Claudius attempted to limit Jewish immigration from Egypt and Syria and warned Jews not to seek any further privileges. Emperor Claudius also restricted Jewish activity in order to decrease political and religious uprisings. Conflicting views about Jesus and the newly formed churches may have

contributed to some of this unrest. In 41 C.E., when these efforts failed, Claudius issued an expulsion order removing all Jews from Italy (Rome). Priscilla and Aquila moved 617 miles / 992.97 kilometers away to Corinth. Every Jewish boy learned a trade. Paul was taught how to make tents from

goat's hair. This teaching helped Paul earn money to pay his expenses, rather than depend upon offerings from the newly forming church. Paul worked with Priscilla and Aquila making tents during the day. In the evening, Paul would teach Corinthians, Jews, and Gentiles about Jesus. Many Corinthians worshipped Apollo, a Greek and Roman god. Paul

would use the Tanakh to convince the Jews that he knew about the Roman and Greek gods (Acts 17:18-34) and used their philosophical beliefs to convince Gentiles that Jesus was Lord.

Acts 18:18-21

Paul remained in Corinth, even after some Jews charged him with the crime of persuad(ing) men to worship

**Paul worked with
Priscilla and Aquila
making tents during
the day. In the evening,
Paul would teach
Corinthians, Jews, and
Gentiles about Jesus.**

God, contrary to the (Jewish) law. Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, refused to hear the charges so Paul's ministry continued at the synagogue. When Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, he took Priscilla and Aquila with him. In Ephesus, Paul performed many miracles and cast out demons. His spiritual

power was so great that "handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out" (Acts 19:12). The book makers had stirred up the masses against Paul which resulted in a riot. When peace was restored, Paul went to Macedonia, leaving behind Priscilla and Aquila and his other disciples

in Ephesus. It is believed that Priscilla and Aquila had a church in their home.

Acts 18:24-26

Apollos, an eloquent speaker, arrived in Ephesus. It was evident that Apollos knew the scripture and was familiar with Greek philosophy. Priscilla and Aquila heard Paul preaching in the synagogue.

They noted that Paul was very familiar with John the Baptist's teaching. Apollos preached the baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4). But, Apollos did not teach baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11). Apollos believed that baptism of repentance would lead to new life. Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside, *proslamban*. The Greek verb,

proslambanō, means that either they took Apollos into their home, or took him apart/away from others. More than likely Apollos spent time in Priscilla and Aquila's home, that also served as a church. They probably used Paul's testimony about Christ to teach Apollos. Paul taught about his own conversion

experience on the road to Damascus. He taught about the resurrection, and the power of life over death. Paul taught about and demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and deliver. After learning more fully about Jesus, Apollos left for Achaia, a Roman province.

What is the difference between the baptism of repentance and the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Do you think the power Paul displayed in Ephesus is still seen today? Why? Why not?

Paul taught about his own conversion experience on the road to Damascus. He taught about the resurrection, and the power of life over death.

Romans 16:3-4

Priscilla and Aquila returned to Rome after Claudius' edict was cancelled. There they united with the Roman Church. Both Jews and Gentiles belonged to

the Roman Church. Paul's letter to the Romans, considered one of his clearest presentations of the gospel, contains a list of fellow workers. Paul asked the church to greet Priscilla and Aquila, who had risked their lives for Paul as they helped him spread the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul's life was threatened

Lesson 12

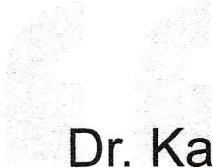
in Corinth and Ephesus and Priscilla and Aquila ministered with him in both places. These interactions with hostile Jews and Gentiles prepared Priscilla and Aquila to answer their call. They served as ministers in a multicultural church and Paul thanked God for their work.

SANKOFA

Historical records have little information about female preachers in the early church. Recent research seems to indicate that women who were deacons, priests, or bishops served at the altar in 430 A.D. Dr. Ally Kateusz, expert in ancient art, presented her findings to the International Society of Biblical Literature. According to Dr. Kateusz in her review of artwork (visual images and symbols), three of these images depict Christian women serving in official liturgical roles. Dr. Kateusz also shared that a stone sarcophagus in Constantinople, at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, has a picture of a male and female standing on either side of the altar. Two things prevent people from knowing the full

story about female ministers in the early church. First, stories about female clergy roles in the early church were banned. Second, few records about clergy over the first seven centuries exist. However, Dr. Kateusz's art findings give evidence that women regularly served alongside men in the church.

CASE STUDY



Dr. Kateusz's art findings give evidence that women regularly served alongside men in the church.

Julita Bartolome served with her husband, Edgardo Bartolome, a Chicago-area pastor. She was deported to the Philippines after several appeals to federal immigration agents failed. Julita ministered to people in her church and the community. According to their son, Aaron

Bartolome, his parents visited the sick, taught Bible studies, and counseled people. With no criminal record and more than 30 years living in the United States, lawyers argued Julita should receive her green card. Her supporters included members of Congress, and the Moody Bible Institute. Like Priscilla, Julita was expelled from a country. Her husband

has expressed discouragement since Julita's deportation. Joint husband and wife ministry has an important function in the church. Full story available at: <https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastors-wife-who-helped-chicago-church-community-deported-after-30-years-in-us.html>.

LIFE APPLICATION

Some bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church have appointed husband and wife teams as co-pastors. Not specified in the current *Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal* (the *Discipline*), many of these teams have proven effective in growing some of the largest AME churches

In today's lesson, Priscilla and Aquila learned and taught together. They did so without being competitive.

spiritually, numerically, and missionally. God granted these teams complementary gifts that attracted female, male, young, old, rich, poor, believers, and unbelievers to Christianity. In today's lesson, Priscilla and Aquila learned and taught together. They did so without being competitive. When Priscilla's name was listed before his, Aquila did not object. The order of

their names probably showed that they were equal partners in ministry or that Priscilla was the better-versed teacher. They answered their call together and successfully did what God commanded them to do as a united team.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the AME Church should recognize co-pastors in the *Discipline*?

Why or why not?

2. How would you help someone learn about baptism of the Holy Spirit?

3. Should pastors be bi-vocational? Why or why not?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Pray for husband and wife ministry teams.

Call the names of missionaries who travel to other lands. Ask God to keep them safe from harm and to give courage and boldness.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for sharing the value that women bring to ministry. We are grateful that when you commanded

that we teach and baptize, you also called husband and wife teams. Let us learn the lessons of Priscilla and Aquila

to work together fearlessly as we share the gospel. In your name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

February 15-February 21

Monday	2 Timothy 4:9-18	(Paul Reflects on His Ministry)
Tuesday	Colossians 4:7-15	(Greetings to Saints in Jesus Christ)
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 13:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28	(The Holy Kiss Strengthens Ministry Bond)
Thursday	Acts 18:4-11	(Ministry Shifts from Jews to Gentiles)
Friday	Acts 18:12-17	(Roman Official Refuses to Settle Dispute)
Saturday	Romans 16:1-2, 6-7, 12-13, 16	(Greetings to All Sisters in Ministry)
Sunday	Acts 18:1-3, 18-21, 24-26; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19	(Priscilla, Key Outreach Minister)