

A MODEL MINISTRY COUPLE

- **Unique in Scripture**
 - Always mentioned together (6 times total)
 - Always in a shared ministry context
 - Always portrayed positively
 - Commended by Paul in multiple epistles
- **Ministry Characteristics**
 - Hospitable: opened their homes for church gatherings
 - Doctrinally sound: corrected Apollos and upheld Paul's gospel
 - Mobile and adaptable: moved strategically with the gospel
 - Enduring: faithfully served from AD 50 to at least AD 67
- **Purpose of Study**
 - Trace their journey through Scripture
 - Understand their role in the early church
 - Draw lessons on partnership, doctrine, and spiritual endurance

ACTS 18:1–3 – MEETING PAUL IN CORINTH

- **Context of the Meeting**
 - Paul arrives in Corinth after Athens (AD 50)
 - Meets Aquila, a Jew from Pontus, and his wife Priscilla
 - They had recently been expelled from Rome by order of Claudius
- **Historical Background**
 - Claudius's reign (AD 41–54)
 - Transition from Republic to Empire (under Augustus in 27 BC)
 - Notable public works: aqueducts (Aqua Claudia), roads, Port of Ostia
 - Attempted to drain Lake Fucine (a project completed in the 1800s)
 - Expelled Jews from Rome (c. AD 49) due to unrest “instigated by Chrestus” (likely a reference to Christ-related disputes)
- **Tentmaking Trade**
 - Paul stayed with them and worked alongside them
 - SKĒNOPOIOI – makers of tents, awnings, curtains from leather or goat-hair cloth
 - Paul's education under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) included the practice of a trade
 - Tentmaking allowed Paul to support himself without burdening others

ACTS 18:18–19 – JOURNEY TO EPHESUS

- **Travel and Transition**
 - Paul departs Corinth for Syria, bringing Aquila and Priscilla
 - They arrive in Ephesus; Paul leaves them there while he visits the synagogue
- **Strategic Ministry Move**
 - Ephesus: a major cultural, religious, and commercial hub
 - Aquila and Priscilla stay to minister while Paul continues traveling
- **Theological Significance**
 - Paul is still ministering with a “Jew first” emphasis (Romans 1:16)
 - Aquila and Priscilla, as Jewish believers, adopt Paul's newly revealed gospel of grace
 - Their ministry reflects the **transitional nature of the early church**—bridging kingdom promises and the revelation of the Body of Christ
- **Ephesus as a Ministry Base**
 - Paul later returns and stays 3 years (Acts 19:1; Acts 20:31)
 - Aquila and Priscilla continue ministering there during this time

ACTS 18:24–26 – TEACHING APOLLOS

- **Introduction to Apollos**
 - Jew from Alexandria; eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures
 - Taught accurately but only knew the baptism of John
- **Private Correction**
 - Aquila and Priscilla take him aside to explain “the way of God more perfectly”
 - Reflects their doctrinal clarity, gentleness, and discernment
- **Method and Maturity**
 - Done privately and respectfully—likely in their home
 - Avoided public embarrassment (cf. Galatians 6:1)
 - Apollos receives instruction humbly and later becomes a key teacher in Corinth
- **Doctrinal Implications**
 - Apollos is brought from a partial kingdom understanding into fuller gospel truth
 - Aquila and Priscilla’s ability to teach a learned man shows theological depth

ROMANS 16:3–5 – GREETINGS FROM PAUL

- **Back in Rome**
 - Around AD 57, Paul writes Romans from Corinth
 - Aquila and Priscilla had returned to Rome after Claudius’s death (AD 54)
- **Paul’s Commendation**
 - “My helpers in Christ Jesus” – fellow laborers, not just companions
 - “Laid down their own necks” – risked their lives for Paul’s safety
 - All the churches of the Gentiles were grateful for them
- **Hosting a House Church**
 - Their home in Rome was a gathering place for believers
 - Reflects maturity, hospitality, and spiritual responsibility
- **Use of “Prisca”**
 - Formal Latin form used in Roman epistolary context
 - Indicates her respectability and standing in the Roman church

PRISCILLA AND AQUILA – OR VICE VERSA?

- **Name Order in Scripture**
 - Priscilla listed first in 4 of 6 passages
 - Possible reasons:
 - Greater theological fluency or public presence
 - Higher social standing in Roman culture
 - Simply a fixed phrase (a “binomial pair” like “salt and pepper”)
- **Interpretive Caution**
 - No indication of reversed headship
 - Their ministry is a model of unity, not role confusion
 - Partnership does not imply hierarchy was ignored

1 CORINTHIANS 16:19 – GREETINGS FROM EPHESUS

- **Continued Ministry in Ephesus**
 - By the time of this letter (AD 55–56), they are again in Ephesus
 - Still hosting a church in their home
 - Paul notes their affectionate greeting to Corinthian believers
- **Mobility and Mission**
 - Locations mentioned: Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and back again

- Likely moved due to tentmaking business, persecution, or ministry needs
- **Spiritual and Material Readiness**
 - Financial independence allowed for frequent relocation and hospitality
 - Doctrinal faithfulness never wavered despite changing environments

2 TIMOTHY 4:19 – FINAL MENTION

- **Paul’s Final Letter (c. AD 66–67)**
 - Written during second Roman imprisonment
 - “Salute Prisca and Aquila” – brief but weighty recognition
 - Names stand alone as symbols of trusted, proven faithfulness
- **Still Serving**
 - Likely still in Ephesus, where Timothy was ministering (1 Timothy 1:3)
 - Supporting leadership and the local assembly even in advanced years
- **Fifteen Years of Faithfulness**
 - From AD 50 to 67, across regions and seasons, they remained steady
 - A contrast to others (like Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10) who fell away

SUMMARY OF THEIR MINISTRY TRAJECTORY

- **Corinth (AD 50)** – Met Paul, partnered in tentmaking, hosted him
- **Ephesus (AD 52)** – Instructed Apollos, hosted a church
- **Rome (AD 57)** – Returned post-Claudius, risked lives, hosted a church
- **Ephesus again (AD 66–67)** – Last mention, supporting Timothy
- **Key Themes:**
 - Gospel-centered mobility
 - Lay leadership and doctrinal discernment
 - Hospitality and endurance
 - Faithfulness through transition

ENDURING LEGACY AND LESSONS FOR TODAY

- **Consistent Faithfulness**
 - Not known for one dramatic act but for steady, long-term service
- **Ordinary Yet Essential**
 - Tradespeople, not apostles, yet vital to the early church
- **Quiet Strength**
 - Served without fanfare but were commended in multiple epistles
- **Role Models for Today**
 - Married couples in ministry
 - Lay leaders who guard truth
 - Servants who offer homes, hands, and hearts for the gospel
- **Their Example Remains**
 - Doctrinally grounded, humble in service, unshaken by change
 - A model of what it means to finish well