*Northwest Bible Church – Oct. 2, 2005             Worship Service – Alan Conner***Rom. 16:1-2***Sister Phoebe*

**INTRO**

**A. THE COMMENDATION OF PHOEBE.**
        “Commend” - suni÷sthmi Lit. meaning of ‘to stand with’ in a sense of ‘to support; to indicate approval, with the implication that others adopt the same attitude. Letters of commendation was common in the ancient world.

    1) Phoebe is a sister in the Lord.

    2) Phoebe is a “servant” of the church.

        Phoebe carried Paul’s letter to the Romans.

        Does diakonos means “servant” or “deaconess

    3) The distinction between the offices of elder and deacon.

Elders are overseers who are entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the church. They are the shepherds of the Christ’s sheep, and are to love, lead, protect, teach, admonish and discipline the sheep as needed.

Deacons are servants as the name indicates. They serve in anyway needed, including mercy ministries, etc.

    4) Only men can hold the office of elder. This is indicated in 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:1-7.

        This sends feminism into a rage

        There is no insult for women to be in a submissive role for they imitate Christ.

**B. WAS PHOEBE A DEACONESS?**
Deaconess View

1) 1 Tim. 3:11 best refers to women deacons, since there is teaching on the office of deacon before and after (8, 12).

2) The “likewise” conjunction marks a transition to a new office or a new category, just like in v. 8. This would support a subsection within the office of deacon, that is, deaconesses.

3) The phrase “deacon of the church in Cenchreae” suggests that Phoebe served in this special capacity for this is the only occasion in which the term diakonos is linked with a particular local church.

4) The use of the masculine noun diakonos also suggests that the office in intended.    Servant View

1) Could refer to deacon’s wives or assistants just as well.

2) But this would be appropriate if deacon’s wives or assistants were in view.

3) Why could this not mean that she is a servant of the church without referring to an office? Also, see that Paul exhorts the Romans to receive her not based on her special position as an office holder in the church, but because she is a “saint” (v. 2) a regular believer in Christ.

4) But this word does not have a feminine form so this argument seems weak.

    Which ever viewpoint is taken, during the first few centuries of the church, the role of a woman servant/deaconess was to care for fellow believers who were sick, care for the poor, for strangers passing through, and for the imprisoned. They would also help baptize and disciple new women converts and instruct children and other women.
    Every church needs such blessed women servants.

**C. MINISTERING TO PHOEBE (v. 2).**
    1) Receive her.

    2) Help her.

    3) Reason: Phoebe has helped others

**CONCLUSION**