

Gulf Cove UMC
Winter Study: Women of the Bible
Rev. Patty Frick, Facilitator

Week 5 Focus: Women Who Define Belonging and Discipleship (3/2-3/2026)

New Testament: Lydia and Phoebe



Neither of these women is described through marriage or motherhood. Instead, it is their work in the early Christian church that is lifted up. Though not much is said about them, we can understand something about women's public roles during this time. Together they remind us that the church is built not only by apostles—but by faithful women who serve as disciples of Jesus.

Historical Snapshot – See other side for map

- **Dates: Lydia**—AD 49–50 (During Paul's 1st Missionary Journey)
- **Location:** Philippi—Roman Colony in Macedonia, modern Northern Greece
- **Dates: Phoebe**—AD 56–57 (During Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey)
- **Location:** Cenchreae—Eastern Port City of Corinth (southern Greece) & Rome
(See Map on Back)

Scripture References: Acts 16:13-15, 40, and Romans 16:1-2

Background: Rev. Patty

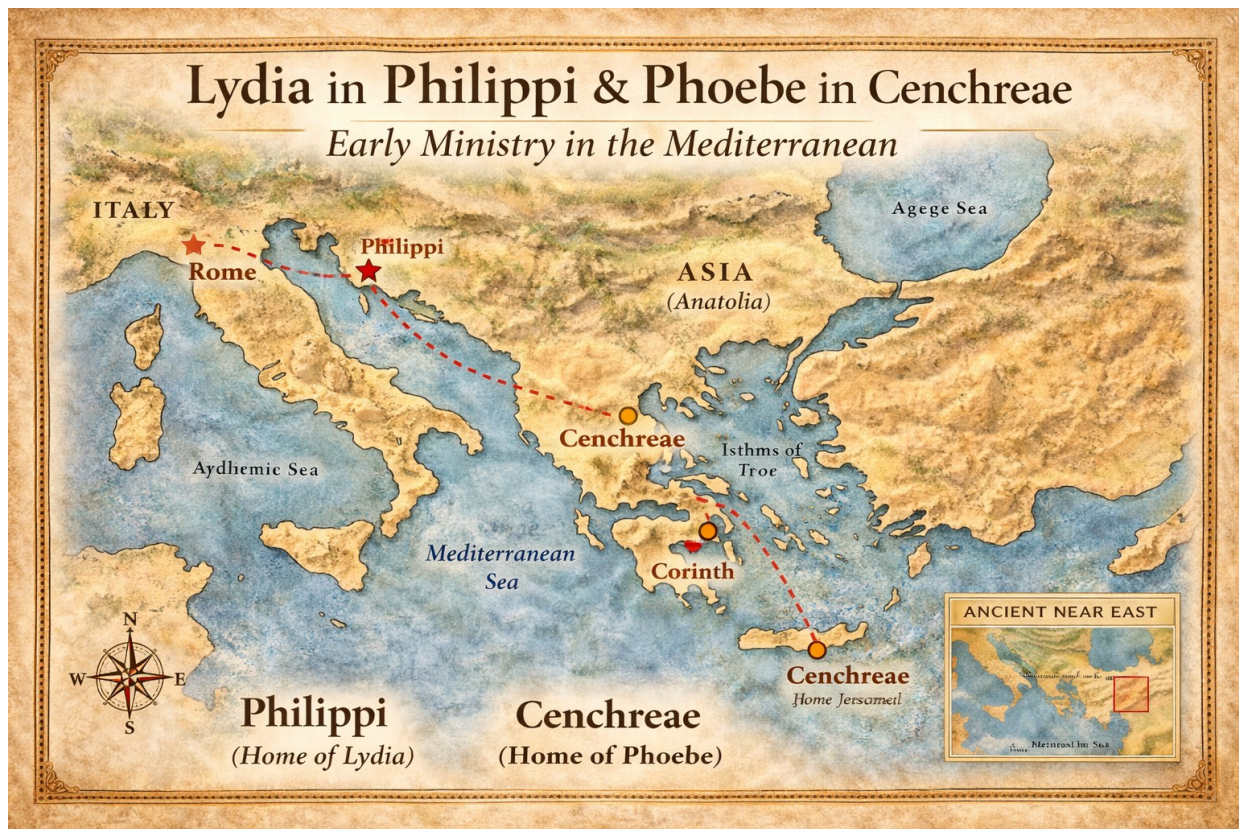
Scripture Readings: (See other side)

Discussion:

1. Lydia's discipleship began with listening and hospitality. Why is this important?
2. Where do you see yourself creating space for faith to grow—in yourself or others?
3. Neither woman is described through marriage and motherhood. What does this tell us about how the early church understood women's roles?
4. How do we recognize and affirm women's leadership today?
5. We have studied a number of women during this study:

Queen Vashti and Esther, Deborah, Jael, Persistent Widow, Hannah, Anna, Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah, Woman with Alabaster Jar, Naomi, Ruth, Lydia and Phoebe.

Take a moment to think about each woman. Which one(s) stand out for you and why.



Scripture Reading: (Lydia) Acts 16:13-15, 40

¹³ On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

⁴⁰ [Later] after leaving the prison [Paul and Silas] went to Lydia’s home, and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.

Scripture Reading: (Phoebe) Romans 16:1-2

16 I [Paul] commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, ² so that you may welcome her in the Lord, as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.