

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LEBANON

LISTENING TO THE WORD: PHILEMON

The following questions are designed to enrich your reading of the text. They are, of course, not the only ones that can be posed when reading, reflecting upon, or interpreting this Letter from Paul to his friend.

- What is your opinion of Paul? Philemon? Onesimus?
- What responsibility does Philemon have to Onesimus? Onesimus to Philemon?
- What do you think of Paul's approach in dealing with Philemon?
- This letter was written in an age when slavery was the norm. What do you think this letter has to say about the institution?
- What do you think Paul is encouraging Philemon to do? Why does he encourage rather than order?
- What does the letter teach about being brothers and sisters in Christ when society, ancient and modern, suggests that we are not equal?
- After reading or hearing this story, what thoughts or ideas arise about relationships, reconciliation and forgiveness?
- What does this text tell us about God? About the life of faith?
- To whom do you think this letter was *really* directed?