

Euodia and Syntyche

Near the close of his letter to the Philippians, Paul urges two women, Euodia and Syntyche, to “be of the same mind in the Lord,” and he appeals to someone else in the church (his “loyal companion”) to help them (4:2–3). The women are coworkers of Paul, and apparently they have had a falling out. This could be a personal matter—a spat that requires an impartial mediator to help facilitate conflict resolution. Or, since the women appear to be prominent in the church (4:3), they could be leaders of major factions with different ideas on congregational policies and programs. Their inability to see eye to eye could pose a threat to the unity of the church as a whole. Some interpreters think that the rift between Euodia and Syntyche might be a primary reason for Paul’s attention to the themes of unity and humility throughout the letter. Although he does not address the two women by name until the end, other verses perhaps are quietly addressed to them and to their followers as well (see 1:27; 2:1–5, 14–15; 3:15–16).