

Reading the Bible Together

The 'why' of reading the Bible together.

We believe that God has graciously given us His Word so that we can know Him, know what He has done for us, and know how to respond to Him. Whether we have been a Christian for years, or whether we are checking out God for the first time, we get to discover who He is and what His will is for us by reading His word.

Because God's Word is so essential, we can't be or make disciples of Jesus without it. There are many ways we might engage with God's Word, (e.g. through personal devotions or listening to sermons), but there is something truly powerful about opening up the Bible with another person and reading it together.

On the next page we've put together a simple tool to help you read the Bible with someone else. You might choose to read the Bible with another believer to help you grow in your faith, or you might open up the Bible with someone who is not a Christian so they can discover who God is for themselves.



The 'when', 'where' and 'what' of reading the Bible together.

You've committed to reading the Bible with someone, wonderful! Now it's time to work out how to make this happen in a way that is helpful and sustainable.

WHEN.

Decide how often you will meet, what time you will meet, and how long your meetings will go for. Make sure everyone is on the same page and able to commit. But also be realistic and allow room for grace. We find weekly or fortnightly is best for continuity, and meeting for at least an hour gives time for deeper reflection. Consider giving someone the job of 'timekeeper' if you need to finish by a certain time, whether it's to pick up the kids or to get back to work after a lunch break.

WHERE.

Wherever you decide to meet, it should be somewhere that is relatively private, and which allows you to share openly. This could be a public space such as a café or park, or in a private space like a home or backyard.

WHAT.

At your first meeting, choose a book or part of the Bible that you will work through together. Passages can be longer or shorter than a single chapter, but bear in mind that you want it to be short enough that you have time to discuss it. For people who are not Christians or for new believers, we recommend keeping the passage short, and starting with one of the Gospels.

The 'how' of reading the Bible together.

This tool is a great place to start. It can be used for any passage of scripture, with groups of any size (though larger groups will take slightly longer). This tool doesn't require any preparation or a 'study leader', but it is a good idea to give someone in your group the job of moving everyone through the steps in a timely manner.

1. Is there anything to follow-up from last time?

2. Have someone read the passage aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

3. Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

4. Discuss together what you think this passage means.

What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?

What things are unclear or confusing?

What do you think the main point of this passage is?

5. Take turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

What is God saying to me? What does this mean for how I live?

Does this change what I think or believe?

Is there anything I should do or stop doing?

Is there something I want to be held accountable for?

TIPS:

If the session veers off-course, you can ask, "Where do you see that in the Bible?" Don't get bogged down on what is unclear or confusing. Write down any questions or concerns you have and commit to following them up during the week (see page 4).

What about between meetings?

After each time you meet to read the Bible together, our prayer is that you will walk away knowing how to respond to that part of God's Word in some way. You may even have a non-Christian friend you can share that part of the Bible with as part of your response. You may also leave with some bigger questions about God and life than you could cover in your time together. And that is okay!

Between meetings you might like to do any of the following:

Follow-up any unanswered questions by talking to a friend, someone from church, or checking what the notes in a study Bible say about it.

Is there something from the passage you feel led to share with someone?

Share your response to this passage with someone so they can follow you up later.

If God has prompted you to do something, act on it.

Pray for the person/s you read the Bible with.

If you are reading the Bible with another believer, we recommend including prayer at some point during your time together.

If you are opening up the Bible with someone who is not a Christian, pray on your own before you meet with them, pray silently during your time together, and keep praying for them between meetings. Pray that they would get to know God and put their trust in Him.