

How to read the Bible Aloud

It is essential that we communicate meaning as we read. If what we say isn't heard or understood then *you will just be speaking into the air* (1 Corinthians 14:9). We need to understand the passage that we are reading. We also need to be clear in our delivery (emphasis, pauses and expression) in order to communicate God's Word effectively.

Understanding

- Your job is to communicate the passage in such a way that people will understand what it says. If you don't understand what you are saying then it will be very hard to read the passage in a way that will help other people understand it.
- This will require a little preparation on your part. Reading the passage through a few times, looking at the context of the passage and praying about it is a good start. It's a good idea to check out a Bible study guide if you're not sure what something in a passage means.
- If you're not sure how to pronounce a word (eg an OT name or place) just break it down into syllables and have a go. Having practised at home will be a great help!

Emphasis

- If you understand the meaning then you will know where to put the emphasis when reading. The reader's emphasis helps the listener get the meaning. The wrong emphasis can hide, confuse or even change the meaning.

Pauses

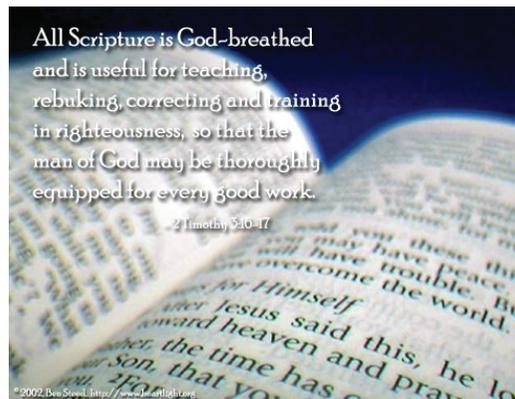
- Pauses divide the text into phrases, and phrases reveal meaning. This also allows the listener to take in what has been said. Pauses in the wrong place can hide, confuse or even change the meaning.

Expression

- Good expression gives the reading liveliness and emotion. Inappropriate expression focuses attention on the reader rather than the reading.

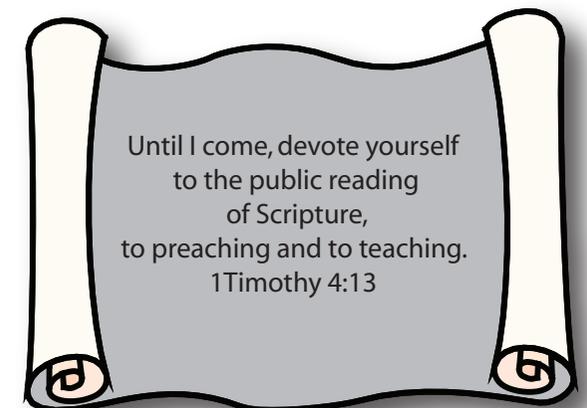
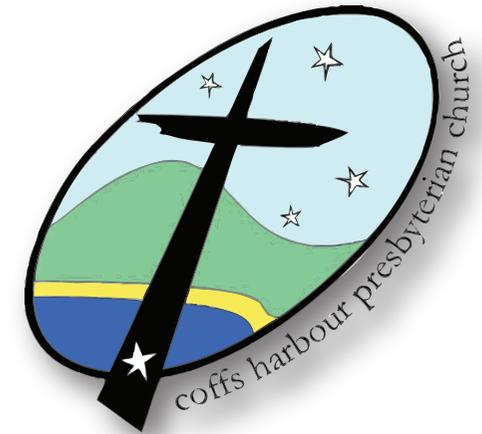
Summary

- Your job is to communicate the meaning of the passage.
- You need to understand what you are reading.
- You can communicate meaning through correct emphasis, appropriate pausing and natural expression.



A Brief Guide To...

Reading the Bible in Church



Be Devoted to the Public Reading of Scripture

God has spoken to us in his Word, the Bible. As 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.* This means that we are to take seriously the task of reading the Bible in church.

In both the Old and New Testament times the Bible was frequently read aloud to the people (Nehemiah 8:2-3, Colossians 4:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Jesus read to the people from the Old Testament in his ministry (Luke 4:16-22) and Paul told Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture (1 Timothy 4:13).

When we meet together in church we ought to come expecting to hear God speak to us through his living and active Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13, Hebrews 4:12).

The Bible reading in church is not there just to fill in time or simply as part of "church liturgy". God's Word is the focus of our meeting (Colossians 3:16). When you think about it, the Bible reading on a Sunday morning is the *most important thing to happen in church!* We need to make sure we do the best we can to read it clearly and accurately.

If you have been asked to do the Bible reading in Church, this leaflet will give you a few tips to help you as you serve our church family in this way.

The Do's

- **Do practice** - Make sure you read through the passage a number of times before Sunday morning. Whoever is leading will usually be able to ring or email you during the week with the reading for Sunday.
- **Do understand** - Make sure that you understand what you are reading! Reading is about communicating. If you don't understand what you are reading there's a good chance nobody will understand what you are saying.
- **Do pray** - Pray that God will help you read clearly and well so that people will be encouraged by it.

The Don'ts

- **Don't put on a performance.** You are not there to impress people with your reading ability. You are there to enable people to hear what God says in his Word.
- **Don't use a "Bible reading voice"** Make sure that you sound natural. You need to use expression - but make sure it's your own, and not "put on".
- **Don't read the sub-headings.** The sub-headings are not part of the original text and can sometimes even be misleading.



When you stand up to read....

- Make sure the microphone is at a good height for you to speak into. Don't be afraid to move it. Remember it's important that people hear what you are saying.
- Tell everyone the passage you are going to read *eg The Bible reading is from Romans 3:21-26.*
- Then give the page reference from the pew Bibles. *eg This can be found on page 1,092 in the pew Bibles.* Note: If you are reading from your own Bible make sure you check the page number in the pew Bibles first!
- **Now wait** - give people a chance to find the passage. **Look** at someone who is trying to flip to the passage - that will give you an idea of when people have found it. **Listen** to ensure the rustling of pages has died down so that you know everyone is with you. Expect people to be following the reading.
- Before you begin reading tell everyone again what you are about to read. *eg Romans chapter 3 beginning at verse 21.*
- You can finish by saying "This is the Word of the Lord" if you want to, it doesn't hurt for us to be reminded of the significance of what we're doing in church.