

BIBLE READINGS

INTRODUCTION

Thank you so much for being willing to help with the Bible Readings in our services. The public reading of Scripture is such an important declaration of who we are and what we believe and we are grateful for your help with this.

On the face of it there doesn't seem to be much to reading out a passage from the Bible but, as you know, it's not as easy as it sounds! It can feel quite daunting when it goes quiet and everyone is listening to you, so here are some pointers to help.

SOME POINTERS

- We almost always use the New International Version. If you haven't got an NIV Bible you can get the passage from <http://www.biblegateway.com/> or alternatively contact the office.
- Be ready to get to the lectern quickly to avoid a long gap. The reading is almost always after a song so you could come the front in readiness during the song. An order of service indicating where the reading will come is kept at the back of church so you could check this when you arrive.
- Announce where the Bible reading is from. It's fine also to give a word or two of explanation if that will help people put it in context.
- Prepare the passage well – the more familiar you are with it, the less likely you are to stumble over it. Read it through several times and practise reading it out loud. Make sure you understand the passage yourself – if it doesn't make sense to you, it won't to anyone else!
- Check for any difficult words or unfamiliar names or place names. Ask others how to pronounce these and make sure you have mastered them. (The basic rule is to say whatever you say with confidence as the pronunciation is often a matter of debate!)
- A common problem when people read out loud is that they speak too quietly. It is best to ignore the presence of the microphone altogether and to project your voice as well as you can. The sound team can always turn you down but it can be hard to turn you up without getting feedback.
- Another common problem is that people rush what they are saying – usually because they are nervous. Do your best to read at a measured pace and not to hurry. Pauses using the punctuation marks can be very effective but need courage! Remember, it is the words that are important and that is what you are trying to convey. People are listening to the words rather than you – you are just the instrument. As a general rule, read more slowly than you would normally. This gives people space and time to absorb the words.
- Try to get as much expression into what you are reading as possible. This works particularly well if you are reading dialogue.
- When you have finished, pause and then say 'This is the word of the Lord' as a confident declaration. People will respond with 'Thanks be to God'.

We are so blessed to have God's word and so privileged to be free to read it aloud. Thank you so much for being involved in this ministry!