

# READING THE BIBLE – HELP!

The Bible can seem daunting – it's a collection of 66 books with all kinds of writing. But if we want to grow closer to God, it is good to get into a habit of regularly reading the Bible and praying. It's great to do this together with others at a Growth Group and in Sunday services, but it's also good to do it on our own. These times allow God to speak to us and can provide a focus for the day. So how can we start? What help is there?



## HOW DO I START?

Bible reading is a great habit to get into and you can start by just taking a few minutes each day. You'll develop your own pattern, but here's a suggestion:

1. **Ask** God to speak to you.
2. **Read** a Bible passage (suggestions on finding a Bible below)
3. **Read** some notes on the passage (suggestions below)
4. **Pray** – One simple pattern is Thank you, Sorry, Please

Don't beat yourself up with guilt if you miss a day - just pick up where you left off next time. It's better to do something than nothing, and a great way to get to know God better.

## NOTES TO HELP YOU

Some people like to read a Bible book through on its own (Mark or Luke are good ones to try), but many find it helps to have some sort of guide – a booklet of notes, commentary or special Bible with explanations. These can help put things in context and give clues to understanding, thinking, praying and applying it to their lives each day.

There is a huge variety of material available, so it can be hard to know where to begin. Below are some ideas which are available on [eden.co.uk](http://eden.co.uk), [scriptureunion.org.uk](http://scriptureunion.org.uk) or [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk) or any Christian bookshop - the nearest is in Gitana Street, Hanley. You can take out subscriptions so your favourite is posted out to you regularly or some resources are also available online eg Word Live

If you have done the Alpha Course, we will have given you '30 Days' by Nicky Gumbel and you might have taken one of the booklets of notes for new Christians:

- 'Every Day with Jesus for new Christians' by Selwyn Hughes
- 'Travelling Through Life Every Day – for new Christians, First Steps in the Christian Faith' by Jeff Lucas.
- 'Inspiring Women Every Day – for new Christians'

There are series of daily readings similar to these usually produced quarterly. Try 2 or 3 different types to see which style suits you best – or swap around. It is not one size fits all or one type for life – we are all different. Here are some popular recommended ones:

**Scripture Union** publish quarterly notes:

- Daily Bread
- Closer to God
- Encounter God for adults

More details at <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Shop/Biblereadingguides/Biblereadingforadults/164868.id>

**ONLINE** you can register with Word Live (by Scripture Union): [www.wordlive.org](http://www.wordlive.org) for online readings by e-mail or to your phone via their app. You can also download podcasts.

The Bible Society provide Daily Lyfe readings: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lyfe/daily-lyfe/>

Some resources cover an overview of the whole Bible in a series of daily readings over a year:

- E100 by Whitney T Kuniholm also published by Scripture Union are very good  
“Essential Jesus” is 100 readings and notes based on Jesus life in a book  
“Essential 100” is a journey through the bible in 100 readings going through both Old and New Testament
- ‘The Message SOLO New Testament: An Uncommon Devotional’ (NavPress Devotional Readers) is available online at Amazon or Eden and based on ‘The Message’ translation
- Cover to Cover by Selwyn Hughes and Jonathan Partridge (CWR) goes through the Bible as it happened

## **BIBLES**

You will need a good modern version of the Bible to read with the notes. There are many around, but the most widely used reliable up-to-date version is the New International Version (updated 2011) – we gave you one of these on Alpha. You can also easily compare translations or download parts of the Bible online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

You can also have the Bible on your tablet or phone for free using the **Bible App** (by life.church) on Android (Google Play), Apple (iTunes) or Microsoft (Store)

## **FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

There are also a huge variety of notes for children, young people and families designed for age specific groups from very similar publishers as the adult material. These include:

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| For Secondary Age: | YPs, One Up, Submerge, Mettle, Bible in a year from Soul Survivor        |
| For Primary Age:   | Snapshots, Topz, Join In-Jump On, XTB etc                                |
| For Pre-Schoolers: | Toddler Bible or The Lion Story-Teller Bible comes with a CD and is fab. |
| For Families:      | Messy Lyfe from Messy Church or Table Talk                               |

Online, we recommend ‘The Bible App for Kids’ (by life.church)

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