



Reading the Bible aloud

training time



“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom...” (Colossians 3:16 NIV)

1. reading the Bible

2Timothy 3.14-17

What do we learn of the importance of reading the Bible?

2. reading the Bible aloud

1Timothy 4.11-16

What do we learn of the importance of reading the Bible aloud?

How should that importance show itself within APC?

3. the ministry of reading the Bible aloud

Reading the Bible aloud in church is more than a rostered job... its a ministry. Think of it... the people of God gathered to have God address them. In reading the Bible aloud you are delivering the personal, powerful & living Word of God. What a privilege!

Sadly, the public reading of Scripture is often under-valued. In church we cringe when the music is played or led poorly. We expect that our musicians should prepare and practice to carry out their ministry effectively. We expect that our preachers will prepare well. And so we should. Its an important part of our ministry of God's Word to each other. However, we often have no such expectation for the Bible reading. We excuse or even expect a lack of preparation. Strangely, the preparation we assume our preachers and musicians will have done for the ministry of God's Word has not applied to the actual reading of it.

The reading of the Word of God is arguably the most important 'moment' in our gathering. We need to value the ministry of reading the Bible aloud very highly, and prepare accordingly.

4. preparing to read the Bible aloud

When we read the Bible aloud, we do more than just read aloud the words on the page. We should communicate the thoughts & ideas of the author. In order to do that we need to understand what we are reading. To understand what we are reading we need to prepare.

Prepare -> Understand -> Read

The better you understand the Bible passage, the better you will be able to read it aloud well.

- Allow yourself enough time to read through the passage prayerfully a number of times. Ask God to help you understand his Word so as to serve him & his people well.
- Read the sections before & after your passage so that you get an idea of the context.
- If you are unsure about what the passage means talk with the preacher. (Also, clarify any tricky words!)
- Practice your reading out loud a few times before Sunday.
- If possible, photocopy or print out an enlarged copy of the passage (download it from the web- www.ebible.com, www.youversion.com/bible/niv84) to mark & underline. (To avoid confusion, make sure that its from the same translation as the church Bibles. ie. NIV 1984)

emphasis

Emphasis enables meaning. wrong emphasis clouds, confuses & changes meaning.

exercise:

"Reading the Bible aloud is an important ministry."

Tip #1: Emphasise those words that introduce **each new idea**.

exercise:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1 NIV)

Tip #2: Emphasise those words that **make a contrast**.

exercise:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, ... (Hebrews 1:1-2 NIV)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 NIV)

Tip #3: When an adjective and a noun come together, you MOSTLY **emphasise the adjective** because it describes the noun.

exercise:

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.” (1Thess 4:7 NIV)

pausing

Pauses give deeper meaning to your reading. They also give listeners time to understand & appreciate what they have just heard.

Tip #1: Allow **punctuation marks** like full stops & commas to guide your pausing.

Tip #2: **Pause before or after an important idea** to draw attention to it.

exercise:

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Col 3.12 NIV)

expression

Reading with expression allows you to reveal the thought behind the words, rather than just the words. Expression can be especially important in reading narrative accounts. Reading without expression is boring & monotonous- exactly what the Bible is not!

Tip #1: Allow **punctuation marks** like exclamation & question marks to guide your expression.

Tip #2: **Volume, pace & pitch** are 3 important tools in achieving good expression.

exercise:

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2.6-7 NIV)

5. reading the Bible aloud

Some tips for when it comes to actually reading the Bible aloud in church.

- DO arrive early for church to let the meeting leader know you are there.
- DON'T read out the subheadings (they are added by the translators and aren't part of the Bible text).
- DO have a drink of water beforehand, and avoid caffeine drinks (which dry out your mouth).
- DO make sure that the microphone is well positioned for your reading posture so that you can be heard loudly and clearly.
- DO start with a warm "good morning" or "good evening". It will give the sound team a chance to get the recording level for your voice before the reading itself.
- DO announce the reading (I'm reading from Luke chapter 7 and from verse 1...")
- DON'T feel the need to add other words of introduction. It's normally more distracting than helpful. Check with the preacher if you think it may be needed.
- DO allow people time to find the passage.
- DO repeat the reference so people get a second chance to be in the right spot and ready to follow along with you once they've found the actual page.
- DO read the bible reading carefully as you prepared it. Read as yourself but with meaning as you prepared it.
- Do keep going. If you do stumble, don't apologise, just keep going.
- DO simply sit down at the end of the reading (there is no need to add any comment after the reading: let the last word be the Bible itself).

Further reading & help:

How to Read the Bible Aloud by Clifford Warne and Paul White, (AIO Press, Sydney, 1986). ISBN 0 908089 35 X

exercise:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Colossians 3:12-17 NIV)

exercise:

1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralysed man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” He said to the paralytic, 11 “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”