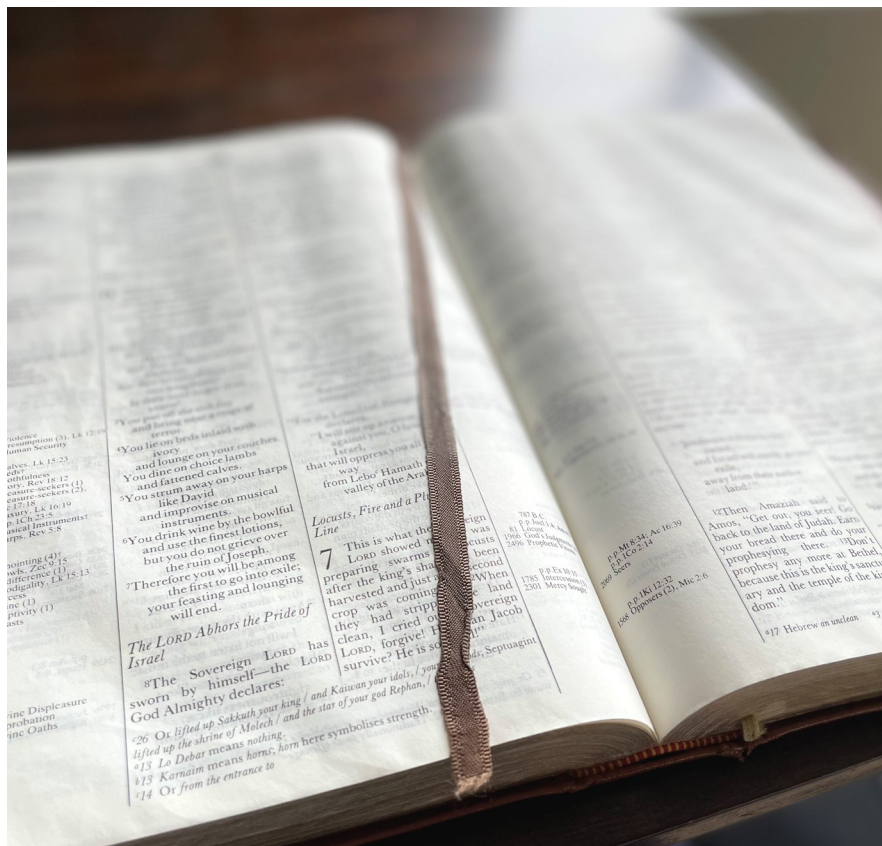


10 TOP TIPS Participating in Public Worship



Reading

Reading the bible in public worship is a ministry which enables those gathered to hear God speak to them. Christians believe that God speaks in and through the words of scripture – that's why we often refer to it as the 'Word of God'. Hearing God's word read aloud is a sacramental encounter with the living God. Preparing well, putting aside time to pray, and offering ourselves as channels through whom God can speak makes this ministry a joy and a gift.

Pray • Prepare • Practise

Check the details!

Where, when and what are you reading? Who will be listening?

Which bible translation will you use, (e.g. New Revised Standard Version)?

Will there be a microphone?

1

Make a 'reading copy'. Its easy to download passages from the bible from sites such as bible.oremus.org. Make space and leave wide margins so that you can mark up your text.

Check the right way to introduce and end the reading – this varies – and write it on your sheet.

2

Set aside time to read the text out loud to yourself a few times. Reflect on its meaning. Imagine its original context. What was the author trying to say? What needs emphasising?

3

Tip 3 is worth doing more than once! Allow some time to elapse, then return to the reading and have another go. What has changed? What has stayed the same?

4

Check the pronunciation of any unusual names or unfamiliar words using biblespeak.org.

Note down how to pronounce them in your text. Above all be confident.

5

Read clearly and expressively, varying your pace and volume to help convey the meaning. Allow plenty of time between phrases and sentences. Most people go too fast, so be careful not to rush!

8

If you make a mistake, don't panic! Stop, take a breath, reread the verse then continue with confidence, knowing that God delights in faithful worship.

9

Ask for feedback. Try not to be defensive, even if suggestions are made for how you could improve. Listen, pray, and try to put good feedback into practice. We are lifelong learners.

10

On • the • Day

Get to church in good time to practise, sort out where to sit, note when you are reading. Have your prepared text with you, including the appropriate introductory and closing sentences. If there's a microphone, give it a try. Ask someone to listen.

6

When it is time for the reading, move to the front, pausing before the altar, then going to the lectern. Set up the text. Take your time, take a breath. Make eye contact with the congregation. Wait for them to be quiet and ready to hear.

7

Reading the Bible prayerfully

A valuable spiritual practice is Lectio Divina which can also help you to read well in public worship. To find out more, why not explore the following resources?

Read: Lectio Divina: From God's Word to our Lives, by Enzo Bianchi, (SPCK 2015).

Website: www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lectio-divina/

Building Bible Knowledge:

Increasing your general knowledge about the bible is worthwhile in its own right, as well as being helpful in giving you an overview of what a passage, chapter or book of the bible is all about. Understanding the relevance of what you are reading helps you to read it well.

Many bibles have excellent explanatory notes in the margins. There are also resource hubs such as:

The Bible Society: www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/collections/go-deeper-with-the-bible/

The Bible Project: www.bibleproject.com

Bible Gateway: www.biblegateway.com

Another Perspective:

Watch: Guidance on 'How to read the bible in church' by the Revd Dan Beesley: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxFR2JnvUw

To speak to someone about reading in public worship, contact your local Church Leader or a Lay Reader via www.lincolnreaders.org.

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