

## SOME GUIDELINES FOR READING THE BIBLE IN WORSHIP

Thank you for volunteering to read the Bible in worship at Old High St Stephen's. The following notes are meant to help you. If you have any questions, please call the Minister (01463 250 802).

### ***Beforehand...***

Normally the reading is from the Good News version, but you might be interested in looking up other versions. Please look up the readings well in advance. If you do not have a Good News Bible at home, please tell Peter in plenty of time and he will provide you with the text (it's important that the reader and the preacher use the same version!).

- Familiarise yourself with the passage. Read it in other versions.
- Look for its meaning. Appreciate its drama.
- Practise reading it out loud.
- Read a little more slowly than you normally speak, but not too slowly.
- Lower your tone if you have a high-pitched voice. Remember: low and slow!
- Use pauses creatively.
- Vary the tone of your voice. Vary the pace of the reading.
- Don't drop your voice at the end of sentences.
- Have as much eye contact with your listeners as possible (without losing your place!).
- Check the microphone and height of the lectern in advance.
- Consider retyping the passage using a larger font and double spacing.
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### ***On the day...***

The first reading normally follows right after the children leave.

As the children leave, please come to the Lectern with your Bible or whatever you are reading from.

**The Reading should be announced as simply and clearly as possible.** You don't need to announce the page numbers, as they are in the bulletin. And also please don't read the headings in **bold** at the top of each passage- they have been added by the editors of the Good News Bible as an aid to people reading privately. They are not part of the original text and should not be read in Church services.

Before you start, take two deep breaths and smile at the Congregation!

The **introduction** is as follows:

The *Old Testament* reading is from the Book of ....., chapter ....., verses *x* to *y*.

Listen for the Word of God.

Allow some time for members of the congregation to find the passage in their own Bibles- listen for when the rustling of paper stops!!- and then read.

At the end of the reading simply say...

Amen.

Usually the preacher will announce the next hymn. The second reading follows the hymn. Stand at the Lectern and allow time for people to take their seats and get comfortable again. Take your breaths and smile again! Then introduce and carry on as before.

**At the end of the second reading**, the formula is slightly different:

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen.

You may then sit, and the Minister will introduce the next hymn.

It's wise to write down on a piece of paper what you are going to say before and after the reading, and take that with you to the Lectern.

### ***One or two extra points to note***

**A New Testament Epistle (Letter) should be introduced** using the title given at the beginning of the letter in the Good News Bible. E.g.:

The *first* reading is from *Paul's Letter to the Romans* chapter ....., verses *x* to *y*

The *second* reading is from *Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, chapter....., verses *x* to *y*

Make sure it's clear whether it's First or Second Corinthians, Thessalonians etc.!

The Epistle reading is from *the Letter from James*, chapter ....., verses *x* to *y*  
(*make sure you know whether it's the letter of James or the Letter to the Hebrews!*)

The Epistle reading is from *the Revelation to John*, chapter ....., verses *x* to *y*  
(*please, please, not Revelations!*)

**Sometimes you need to change the wording at the beginning** of the text slightly so as to put the passage into context. For example, sometimes the reading will begin with someone speaking- you need to say who it is. E.g. John chapter 15 at verse 1 begins:

"I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit...."

You should add the words 'Jesus said' to the beginning of such a passage:

**Jesus said**, "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. He breaks off every branch in me that does not bear fruit...."

Or at Luke 9.21, the passage begins:

Then Jesus gave **them** strict instructions not to tell anyone...

In your preparation you should look at the context to see who 'them' refers to (the answer is at Luke 9.18). So it would be better to read:

Then Jesus gave **his disciples** strict instructions not to tell anyone...

In a reading from an Epistle (Letter) you might say, 'Paul writes' or 'the author writes'. For example, no-one knows who wrote the Letter to the Hebrews.

### **Acknowledgements**

to Sheila Stephen of the Board of Parish Education, on whose material some of this leaflet is based.