

## COMMUNICATING

Reading in worship is not just a function, but a service to the worshipping community, with some very practical dimensions

### TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND SO AS TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD

*This involves checking again  
do I understand the reading?  
What is the overall sense of it?  
Are there difficult words in it?  
What is the mood – glad or sad,  
joyful or threatening...?*

*Depending on the nature of the Scripture  
passage, different tones are appropriate.*

Other, even more practical, aspects are speed, audibility, eye-contact and the use of microphones. It helps when reading aloud to be aware of the key sentence or images that you wish to communicate.



## NOW YOU ARE GOING TO PROCLAIM THE WORD . . . . .

You have read the Scripture passage, prayed it, reflected on it, studied it, now to proclaim it. . .

- i) Practice reading it aloud several times in the translation used in the church. Check pronunciation and work out where to take breath. If possible, ask a friend to listen to you.
- ii) See if you can get into the church during the week to find out what it feels like to read there - in a large place, you need to read slowly and distinctly. This may sound strange to you until you get used to it, but it really does help others to hear better. Take your friend with you.
- iii) If there is a microphone, don't stand too near it or there will be 'feed back' and don't stand too far away or it won't 'catch' you - get a moment to test it. It is someone else's responsibility to ensure that the microphone is there and working, not yours, so don't worry!

If there is no microphone, it is even more important to speak slowly and clearly as if you are talking to that person at the very back of the church.

### The National Bible Society of Ireland

Bestseller Bookshop  
41 Dawson Street, Dublin 2

The Bible Society bookshop Bestseller offers a very good range of books and resources on Scripture and worship. On our web page you will find further helpful background information on the Scriptures and also a list of resources to assist with reading the Scriptures aloud.

tel 01 - 677 3272  
fax 01 - 671 0040  
email [nbsi@natbibsoc.iol.ie](mailto:nbsi@natbibsoc.iol.ie)

[www.biblesociety.ie](http://www.biblesociety.ie)

*"Do you understand  
what you are reading?"*  
Acts 8:30 NRSV



## Reading for Worship a practical guide

prepared by the  
National Bible Society of Ireland



BRIATHAR DÉ NOCHTAITHÉ DO CHÁCH  
God's WORD OPEN FOR ALL

The National Bible Society of Ireland,  
41 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

# GOD'S WORD IN HUMAN WORDS

We believe that reading in worship is a ministry to the community gathered in prayer, a service which is gift also to the individual reader.

## THE STARTING POINT...

### PRAYER

Since reading in a setting of prayer is life-giving, it helps that we, as readers, don't treat the reading simply as a task, but rather, as a part of our relationship with God. Thus, it is good to begin, not with study or pronunciation, but in a spirit of prayerful reflection. This could be very simple - in an appropriate place and, perhaps, calling on the Holy Spirit to be with us. Then quietly and slowly read the passage, several times.

The reader could choose from a variety of possible steps: does the reading evoke a personal memory? Is there a word that touches me deeply? What images or feelings are summoned up by the reading? What is my mood at present and what is the mood of the reading? This mulling over should take some time, so that I come to the Word of God with my whole self.

## GOING A LITTLE DEEPER...

### REFLECTION

As the reading progresses, it may be that there are things in the text which are unclear or upsetting or puzzling. Sometimes a word of explanation is needed to shed light on a story or teaching, within its own time and place, so that the Scriptures can speak today. The best approach here is to identify as well as you can your own questions and then seek help. Often, it is useful to ask some of the following questions:

*When and where was the passage written?  
What was happening at the time?  
How does the text fit into the book it comes from?  
Do we hear it differently today?  
Does the reading reflect a shared human experience?*

Sometimes the notes in your Bible will be helpful. Otherwise, some other resources could be used such as a small Bible dictionary or a commentary. There is also much helpful material available on the internet. The Bible Society can help you further too (see reverse for details).

## COME, HOLY SPIRIT

### BACK TO PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit! We pray that God's Word may penetrate our minds and our hearts, and so change our lives.

We bring the reading consciously back to prayer, bearing in mind our first impressions and our insights from study. This is the moment when we look for the teaching which touches us personally. Even if this isn't always the case, it will happen a surprising number of times.

Our prayerful wondering can move forward with different questions:

Am I encouraged, challenged, affirmed by this reading?  
Does the reading touch my life?  
Perhaps one word "jumps off the page" for me?  
Is there a word for the community today?

We should set aside some time later to pray the reading again and let this word of God be part of God's relationship with us and of ours with God.

**Come, Holy Spirit, inspire my reading.  
Come, Holy Spirit, give me courage to read well.  
Come, Holy Spirit, help us all to listen deeply.**

For the Spirit searches everything,  
even the depths of God. For what human being  
knows what is truly human except the human spirit that  
is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly  
God's except the Spirit of God.  
1 Corinthians 2:10-11 NRSV