

25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear all

I thought I'd do a short letter before my break – by the way, I will still be around... I'm not going away.

Today is Bible Sunday, and Sonia preached a fascinating sermon about the bible, and what it contains. I thought I'd follow up with a couple of very useful articles.

We should all be reading our bibles regularly, as a way to get to know God better, and to help us find out how to follow Him – to be better Christians. It also helps us to get a sense of perspective on life, and help and inspiration in how to live it.

But how do we read the bible? I have attached a couple of useful articles. One is from [Dr Paula Gooder](#) (Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral), who gives some very helpful advice. It is particularly important to know the context, and the type of literature you are reading.

The other, from the Bible Society, follows on from Paula's point 6, and gives details, including pros and cons, of the [available translations](#). For what it's worth, I use the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) as my go-to version (it is also the 'default' version of the Church of England), and *The Message* for a completely different and challenging perspective.

I would also say that you should have some sort of plan to follow, rather than either random flicking through, or reading through from Genesis to Revelation. (Actually, there is nothing wrong with the latter if you have the stamina, but it's not easy going. Nor is it chronological, or even really logical!).

I would recommend using bible notes, such as Scripture Union, Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) or Crusade for World Revival (CWR). Each organization does various levels or for particular groups. Or you may choose to read a particular book with commentary, or follow a different pattern. The Church of England follows a set lectionary which can easily be purchased or downloaded. It is contained in the Daily Prayer webpage or app.

The Morning Prayer readings are published both as a book and an app with commentary on the readings. My own choice is to follow up the daily readings in the series of commentaries ... *for Everyone* (OT written by John Goldingay, NT written by Tom Wright. You may be interested to know that both of them have published their own translations of the bible).

Old children's chorus:

The best book to read is the bible,  
The best book to read is the bible,  
If you read it every day, it will help you on your way,  
Oh the best book to read is the bible!

Here sung by children from Bethany Church in Pune, India.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu13m6\\_yckg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu13m6_yckg)

Stay safe



Blessings and love

Mark