

Reading the Bible together:

This year in Prayer & Study groups we want to put the emphasis on prayer and reading the Bible together as a group of believers.

Over the next number of months we want the group to read the book of Colossians together. We think it is important for Christian growth that we spend time reading and listening to God's Word and searching the Scriptures to discover what God is actually saying to his children.

During this study, we will not be producing a set of questions for each study, but giving you a framework that can be used for each passage to help you to explore what God's Word is actually teaching. The purpose of these these studies is not to find answers to specific questions but to discover what the text actually says and teaches. This framework will hopefully develop skills that you can use in your own study of Scripture.

We would encourage you to read and examine the passage at home and then come to discuss it with the group. It would be ideal if the leader could spend an equal amount of time on prayer and Bible study during the evening as well as allowing time for supper and conversation together. The evening should always start with prayer, asking God to help you all to understand and obey the Scripture you are going to read together. It should also finish with prayer as you pray the lessons of the passage into your lives and take time to pray for one another.

Dates and passages:

October 2nd - **Colossians 1:1-14** October 16th - **Colossians 1:15-23**
November 6th - **Colossians 1:24-29** November 20th - **Colossians 2:1-14**
December 4th - **Colossians 2:16-23** January 15th - **Colossians 3:1-17**
February 5th - **Colossians 3:18-4:1** February 19th - **Colossians 4:2-6**
March 4th - **Colossians 4:7-18**

Framework to be used to study each passage:

Context:

- What can you learn about the person or situation to which the letter is written?
- What are we told about the author and his circumstances?
- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this one? Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage you are reading?

Observation:

- What is the main point or purpose of this passage?
- Are there any major sub-sections or key connecting words that indicate the logical flow of the passage (e.g. for, therefore, but, because).

Meaning:

- How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words.
- What does this teach you about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
- What does it teach or challenge you about Christian living?

Application:

- How does this passage challenge or confirm your understanding?
- After reading this passage, what lesson will you be praying into your life?