

Reading Scripture

I. Introduction

- A. Reading Scripture should be continued in worship
 - 1. Moses read the law publicly before the people (Ex 24:7)
 - 2. Joshua had the law read to the people when they entered Canaan (Josh 8:34)
 - 3. Ezra read the law to the people in making reforms (Nehemiah 8)
 - 4. Paul told the Colossians to send his epistle to Laodiceans so they could read it too (Col. 4:16)
 - 5. Paul said to give attention to the reading of scripture (I Tim 4:13)
 - 6. God commanded for his word to be read publicly (Dt 31:11 at Tabernacles)
- B. Why this teaching on the reading of scripture?
 - 1. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. (2 Tim 3:16)
 - 2. If scripture is “God breathed”, from the mouth of God, we should have it read
- C. This practice is usually overlooked in modern times
 - 1. Churches aren’t used to listening to scripture
 - 2. The reading that is done is often done poorly
- D. Since scripture is the word of God in written form, it should be read and it should be read well.

II. Considerations in reading scripture:

- A. Bible Translation
 - 1. Should be one that renders the word of God faithfully
 - 2. Should be one easy to understand by the congregation
 - 3. Should be a “dignified” translation. (NIV translates “monthly period”)
 - 4. The print should be large enough for you to read comfortably
- B. Passage to be read
 - 1. If the speaker has a preference on the passage to be read, he should make it known to the scripture reader in advance.
 - 2. If the preacher does not make a passage known in advance, the reader should have one ready
- C. Purpose and Time
 - 1. The purpose of the reading should be considered

- a. If the purpose is to prepare thoughts for the Sermon, then not only should the passage be appropriate, but the time should be appropriate as well - it should be read fairly close to the time of the sermon.
- b. If the purpose is NOT specifically to prepare thoughts for the sermon, then the passage should prepare worshippers to worship. Passages dealing with God's greatness and mighty acts, his grace, our unworthiness, etc. are appropriate.
These types of passages are usually more appropriate at the beginning of worship as a "Call to Worship"
- c. One can use both of these types of passages at the appropriate times in worship. A "call to Worship" passage at the beginning, and a "Teaching" passage before the sermon.

2. Note that there are varied purposes for different scriptures
 - a. Didactic (teaching)
 - b. Wisdom Literature
 - c. Narrative
 - d. Epistle
 - e. Apocalyptic

D. Considerations in choosing a passage to be read

1. Choose one that carries a complete thought, not just a fragment
2. Choose one right for the occasion
3. Choose one that suits the audience, one they can understand
4. Choose one that suits you, one you can understand

II. Preparing to Read

- A. Gain an understanding of the passage
 1. This will help you to read more effectively
 2. Ensure you know the meaning and pronunciation of each word
 3. Ensure you understand the purpose of the passage. (Does it tell a story, make an argument, call for worship, offer praise to God, etc.)
 4. Know the central thought of the passage, and determine the basic message we should get from a reading of the passage
 5. Understand the mood in the passage and note changes in this throughout the passage
- B. Practice out loud at least three times
 1. Pretend you are actually in front
 2. Concentrate not on reading, but on the meaning
 3. Think "phrase", not individual words or sentences
 4. Make note of words and phrases that require special emphasis
 5. If the passage is a narrative with dialogue, read it that way

IV. Reading the Scripture

- A. Pause and make eye contact
- B. Opening Remarks (keep to a minimum)
 - 1. Announce clearly and loudly the book chapter and verses
 - 2. Any other remarks should be brief or none at all
 - a. If it is a call to worship, you may want to conclude your reading with something like, “The Lord is good to us, therefore, let’s worship him”
 - b. You are not there to preach or make small talk, or tell a joke.
- C. Do not bury your head in the book. (Use your finger to read)
- D. Volume - Read loud enough
- E. Interpretation
 - 1. Feel the tone and mood of the passage. Also take note of dialogue
 - 2. Do not use a weak monotone voice
 - 3. Be sincere (don’t use a “holy tone”, but do read with warmth and feeling)
- F. Enunciate
 - 1. Don’t mumble or run your words into each other
 - 2. Note the punctuation marks in the passage.
 - 3. Take your time, it’s not a race

Drills #3

Pick any three of the following Bible passages to read aloud. Read at least one of the Psalm passages. (Practice at least 5 times)

I Peter 2:5

Hebrews 13:15

Isaiah 1:11-17

Matthew 15:9

I Corinthians 14:7-20

John 4:23-25

Psalm 117

Psalm 38

Psalm 122

Psalm 133

Psalm 148