



Bible Study Groups

Bible Study Groups Booklet
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Introduction

This small booklet exists to help everyone in the Cornerstone Church family to understand:

- Why we have mid-week Bible study groups.
- Why we would like as many people as possible in our church family to belong to a Bible study group.
- When the Bible study groups are meeting.
- Who is going to lead the Bible study groups
- What we do in our Bible study groups.
- How to make the most of Bible study groups.

Lots of churches have some sort of mid-week groups. Usually churches have slightly different ways of doing things and we hope that this booklet makes clear what we aim to do at Cornerstone Church.

Thanks for making the time to read this and as ever, if you have any questions and comments that arise from reading this, please do speak to others in the church and/or one of the church Elders.

Mike Walton

Minister at Cornerstone Church



Why we have mid-week Bible study groups

An important passage from the Bible that informs us about various aspects of church is Acts 2v42-47.

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

It is clear that being church together was so much more than just a Sunday morning thing. These early Christians shared their lives together, meeting together daily in the temple courts.

The temple courts in Jerusalem now no longer exist and modern life doesn't allow for daily getting together. However, it is healthy when people in a church family are sharing life with each other during the week. That could be meeting up for a coffee, or shopping together or helping each other out with something.

It is also good to devote ourselves to the apostles teaching.

Hence our mid week Bible Study groups. It is our way of trying to help each other devote ourselves to God's word together.

As we devote ourselves to God's Word and the Holy Spirit gets to work, that is how our Lord Jesus Christ changes us to become more like Him. Something every Christian should want.



Bible study groups are for everyone

At Cornerstone we long for everyone to be growing in their Christian life and to be knowing Jesus ever more closely. An important aspect of that is trying to follow the pattern that Jesus sets out for His church, the meeting regularly together on a Sunday but also mid-week as well. Jesus knows how important it is to focus on Him together.

As result, we strongly encourage everyone in our church to be part of a mid-week Bible study.

It doesn't matter whether somebody has been a Christian for years or a few weeks, our Bible study groups are for them. Even if somebody is not yet convinced about Jesus, they are helpful places to look into Christianity further.

Our Bible study groups meet most weeks during school terms and we hope that many in our church family will be able to make it to their group most weeks.

However, we appreciate some people work in the evenings or are at a stage of life where they find themselves really pressured. Perhaps you have a young family or you are supporting/caring for a family member. For some people they might make it to the group every other week (e.g. perhaps parents are alternating week by week). For others, for good reasons, they might only be able to commit to attending once a month.

We understand life is complicated and pressured. At the same time, we want to help everyone make the most of knowing and serving Jesus and for the vast majority of our church, that will mean being part of a Bible study group.



When are the Bible study groups meeting

At the time of printing, we currently run two Bible study groups (as we grow, we hope to offer Bible study groups on other days). These happen regularly (during school terms) on:

- Tuesdays 11.30am to 1.00pm – In person only
- Wednesday' 7.30pm to 9.00pm – In person and on Zoom

The Tuesday group is for ladies only and the Wednesday group is open to all.

The groups usually meet in the home of somebody from our church family. Address details etc are given out when someone expresses interest in joining a group.

Who is going to lead the Bible study groups

Some of our church elders will be involved in leading a Bible study group. There are other individuals in our church family who have the right gifts, willingness, and availability to lead a bible study group. These are identified by the church elders but suggestions are always welcome from the church family.

None of the Bible study leaders will have an answer for every question that may come up in the group they serve. Instead, the emphasis is on the whole group learning together, with the leader helping to make this possible.



What do we do in the Bible Study groups

Going back to Acts 2v42-47.

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

We try to focus mainly on devoting ourselves to the Word of God and to prayer.

Engaging with God through the Bible

Christians believe that God speaks to us today as we read, hear and prayerfully think about what God has said in the Bible.

There are however, many different ways to interact with God's word. These include:

- Straight forward Bible study e.g. working our way through Colossians
- A course, with a video and time to get into the Bible
- Following up on the previous Sunday's sermon
- Reading a short Christian book together and then discussing it
- Looking at a particular issue, e.g. Why does God allow suffering?

Our Bible study groups at Cornerstone will perhaps spend 5 weeks looking at a book of the Bible, followed by 3 weeks thinking further about the passage that was preached on the previous Sunday, followed by a couple of weeks looking at a short Christian book. They will always have God's Word at the centre. How we engage with it will differ from time to time.

We do hope that everyone will feel able to contribute to the discussion in some way. It is helpful to be aware of the following points:



- Don't be afraid of silences. People are thinking.
- Do ask questions, there is no such thing as a silly question
- Don't be afraid of disagreeing, just do so in a gentle way.
- Do speak up (if you're a quieter person)
- Don't be afraid to say you don't understand
- Do speak less (if you're a chattier person)
- As people get to know each other better, be prepared to share joys and struggles together.

Prayer

We're told in Philippians 4v6

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Our Heavenly Father loves to hear and then use our prayers about lots of different things. We can't pray about everything in our Bible study groups but we do hope they are places where anyone can share and pray about a variety of things.

These could include praying about

- what God has said to you in the Bible passage you have just looked at.
- concerns and worries for yourself or other people known to you.
- areas of your life where God has been particularly challenging or encouraging you.
- situations where you are particularly trying to share the gospel with others.
- events in our country and/or further afield.
- particular things that are happening in the life of the church.

Some people in the Bible study group will be comfortable to pray out aloud. For others, they will prefer to pray silently.



Please only share items for prayer outside of the group if the people concerned have explicitly said so. Sharing items for prayer can in reality turn into a Christian version of gossip. It is not a particular problem that we have at Cornerstone, but one we need to be aware of.

Every month or so, a bible study evening will be devoted to just praying. This will be a really important time where together we express our reliance on God through prayer.

Fellowship

Even in a small church it is not possible to know everyone equally well. We hope that our Bible study groups will also be a place where we can 'share life' together. To be a place of Christian support and service.

This might be the opportunity for someone in the group to ask for help. e.g. for a lift to the hospital or help with picking up kids from school one day. It may just be possible for us to serve each other practically, if we are able to.

People will of course have good friends at Cornerstone who are not necessarily in their Bible study group. Our Bible study groups are not supposed to replace these other friendships but we do hope and pray that our groups are places where Christian friendship can also flourish.



How to make the most of Bible study groups

To help with making the most of time together in Bible Study groups, the following pointers might be helpful.

Before the group meets

- Ahead of the group meeting, pray for your time together.
- Make it the norm to come to Bible Study Group. If you can't come, let your leader know and perhaps a prayer request or two to share with the group.
- Remind yourself that some weeks will be encouraging weeks, others will be challenging, others will be where you end up serving more and receiving less and other weeks will be the opposite. All of the above are useful in Jesus' kingdom!

At the Group

- Aim to be on time, to make the most of the time chatting before the Bible Study starts.
- Be willing to share encouragements and challenges about being a Christian from your previous week or from the week to come.
- Generally speaking, what is said in the group should stay within the group.

Afterwards

- Pray for the other group members during the rest of the week.
- Consider how you could support someone in the group going through a difficult time.



Details of further information can be found on the back page of this booklet



Further information

Further information can also be found on our website or in further booklets. Below is a list of booklets and/or website links that you might find helpful.

The paper booklets will normally be available at Sunday Services on the Welcome Table and pdf versions are also available on the website.

Aims, Values and Beliefs Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/our-priorities
www.cornerstonegrays.org/our-beliefs

Bible Study Groups Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/bible-study-groups

Children and Young People Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/children-youth

Contact details and Data Privacy Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/privacy

Giving Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/giving

Membership Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/membership

Safeguarding Policy

www.cornerstonegrays.org/safeguarding

Serving Teams Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/serving-teams

Sharing Jesus with others Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/exploring-the-christian-faith

Welcome to Cornerstone Church Booklet

www.cornerstonegrays.org/church-life

