

1 Peter 1.13-2.12

¹³ Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. ¹⁴ Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. ¹⁵ Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

¹⁷ If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸ You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰ He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹ Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

²² Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³ You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For

"All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,

²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever."

That word is the good news that was announced to you.

² Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner,"

⁸ and

"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ¹² Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

How to dwell in the Word

Dwelling in the Word is a process that many people in the Diocese of Oxford are using to listen to scripture, to each other and to God. It's not about sharing information or seeking scholarly answers or even the right answers to the issues raised in the text, but it is about listening each other into free speech and discerning what God is up to amongst us.

Have copies of this sheet available at every meeting so that the verses overleaf can be read by different people each time you meet. You should set aside, without apology, at least 20 minutes for this activity. Dwelling in the Word is far from magical or formulaic; it won't solve all the problems or answer all the questions, difficulties and issues your group, council or committee has to address. However, over time, this discipline forms a community of the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit is as welcome and expected a presence as anyone else there.

- Start with prayer inviting the Spirit to guide your attending to the Word of God.
- When everyone is ready, begin with one person reading the passage out loud to the group.
- Now let some silence unfold as people let the words have their impact. Notice where your attention lingers. This might be a word or a phrase.
- Ask a second person to read the passage out loud once more.
- Each person in the group finds someone they know less well and listens to that person as s/he says what they heard in the passage. What captured their imagination in the passage and what would they like to find out more about? Each person should listen well as they will be asked to report back to the rest of the group (or another pairing if you're a large group) what their partner said.
- What have you heard that might be significant? Discuss as a group what God might be up to in the passage for your group on that day. It can be helpful for the facilitator to make a brief note of what she or he hears from the group and to capture that in a short prayer at the end.
- Finally, let people know that as your conversation on other matters continues, anyone at any time may call for the Gospel and the group will return to the passage.

God of gentleness and love
Draw near to us as we draw near to you
Dwell in every heart and conversation
Fashion in us the likeness of your Son,
Jesus Christ.

Help us to discern together all that you
are calling us to be
And all that you are calling us to do.

Assist us, by your Spirit, to become a
more contemplative,
more compassionate and more
courageous Church
For the building of your kingdom and
the glory of your Son.

Amen

Dwelling in the Word is not the only way to study scripture, but if you'd like to find out more then *Dwelling in the Word - A Pocket Handbook* is available to purchase from churchmissionsociety.org/resources/dwelling-word-pocket-handbook

Dwelling in the Word. So that the Word begins to dwell in you.