

# Nine Recommendations and Priorities for Bible Reading in 2019

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by Ben Purves

Dear Church Family,

We invite you to join with us in a two-year journey as we seek to grow in faithfulness and devotion to the Word of God and prayer. More than a New Year's resolution, we invite you to walk together in these spiritual disciplines as a church family.

## **READ TOGETHER**

We invite you to read through the Bible with us in 2019-2020! At the pace of about two chapters a day, our extended version of M'Cheyne's classic Bible reading plan will take us through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament and Psalms twice over the next two years. We pray that this journey will enrich our fellowship as we share in God's Word together throughout the year.

The schedule will be provided each week in Sunday's bulletin and the [OBC App](#), or you can [download the entire schedule for 2019](#).

If you want to read through the entire Bible in 2019, we invite you to follow [M'Cheyne's classic one-year plan](#). You will remain united with our church family's reading, with the inclusion of additional texts each day.

## **PRAY TOGETHER**

As we seek to grow in faithfulness in reading, we also want to grow in faithfulness in prayer for our church family. We also invite you to pray with us in the new year!

In tandem with our reading schedule, we will provide a daily prayer schedule that will lead us to pray for each of our members, ministries, and missionaries at least once per month. In praying for our membership, it would be helpful to open your copy of the membership directory as you pray.

This prayer schedule will give shape to praying for one another, and it is our hope that it will serve to increase our faithfulness in praying for our church family. This schedule will be available in each week's bulletin insert.

## **NINE RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER**

Here's a few recommendations and priorities as we embrace this reading plan for the New Year:

**1. Set a regular time for Bible reading and prayer.** There is wisdom in planning for your time with the Lord in this New Year. Popular times for reading are at the beginning and close of the day, as we look to put the Lord at the front of everything, and to hear from Him before we listen to other voices. For slug/bus/train passengers during their DC commute, this time is often well-suited for a daily ritual of reading and prayer.

**2. Consider M'Cheyne's split between shared and secret reading and prayer.** Robert Murray M'Cheyne encouraged his church members to read one passage together with their spouses, families, or friends, and to read the other passage in secret. As you're able, share together in the Word with others each day, but do not neglect having a secret time of reading and prayer between you and the Lord alone.

**3. Identify a verse or truth to meditate on.** Turn it over in your mind and heart throughout the day, and respond to it with prayer. Seek to share it with a brother or sister before the day's close. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

**4. Aim for perseverance instead of perfection.** Most everyone falls behind in their Bible reading plans. Catch up if it's realistic, but if you're having difficulty, start anew with the next week's reading. Please don't insist on perfection, only to abandon reading together. Move forward in the schedule, and rejoin your church family in the next week's reading of the Word.

**5. Ask your brothers and sisters to share the treasures they are uncovering in God's Word.** This is one great blessing of doing this together. Share what the Lord is doing in your soul as you apply His Words to your heart, and learn from your brothers and sisters. This is a wonderful conversation to have with your Community Groups, Bible Studies, accountability partners, family members, and friends. Encourage one another to persevere in the Word. I recommend One to One Bible Reading by David Helm. This book gives practical wisdom and encouragement for reading the Bible together with others.

**6. Listen to *Via Emmaus*.** We are glad to announce that we are launching *Via Emmaus*, a new weekly conversation podcast that will speak toward each week's reading in Scripture. More news coming soon.

**7. Pick-up Volume 1 of For the Love of God by D. A. Carson.** This daily devotional follows along with M'Cheyne's reading plan. It is a rich devotional that can be read individually or with others as you reflect on each day's reading.

**8. Read more.** Do not slavishly follow the Bible reading plan to the exclusion of reading other parts of Scripture. Feast on the Word!

**9. Seek to abide in Christ and His Word.** Your time in reading and prayer will not be perfect. This plan is a structure to help us grow in faithfulness, and to increase our joy. Do not allow this plan to become slavish, or checking the box to become more important than the joy of abiding in Christ. Diligent completion of daily Bible reading is a miserable failure when it is reduced to a task. Let it be an act of worship, and remember that enjoying Christ and satisfying your soul in Him is of utmost worth.

May these tools aid us as we seek to devote ourselves to the Word and prayer in this coming year. Let us seek the Lord in prayer and the pages of Scripture. May this reading and prayer schedule be a helper of your joy, and not a burden.

May the Lord give grace that we will grow in faithfulness and devotion to Him through this journey!

Pastor Ben