

# Read and Pray Together in 2019

December 14, 2018

by Ben Purves

Dear church family,

I am excited to share a few things that are upcoming in the new year. Simply put, we are inviting you all to read the Bible and pray together!

## 1. Read Through the Bible Together

In just a few weeks, I invite you to join together in a churchwide plan to read-through-the-Bible. This is something that we, in the history of Occoquan Bible Church, have not undertaken before.

This is not your typical read-through-the-Bible-in-a-year plan. Far too often these plans become yet another failed new year's resolution. Instead, at the pace of two chapters a day, we invite you to read through the entirety of the Bible with us over the next two years. Our Bible reading plan is based on Robert Murray M'Cheyne's classic plan, which will take us through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament and Psalms twice as we read together through 2019-2020.

Every Sunday morning we'll provide a Bible reading schedule for the week as a bulletin insert. In addition, our Bible reading plan and the passages for each day will be easily available in the Bible feature that we've added to the OBC app.

In December of 1842, M'Cheyne wrote encouragement to his church about the blessings of reading through the Bible together as a church family:

*1. The whole Bible will be read through in an orderly manner.*

The Old Testament once, the New Testament and Psalms twice. I fear many of you never read the whole Bible; and yet it is all equally Divine, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete" (2 Tim 3:16-17). If we pass over some parts of Scripture, we shall be incomplete Christians.

*2. Time will not be wasted in choosing what portions to read.*

Often believers are at a loss to determine towards which part of the mountains of spices they should bend their steps. Here the question will be solved at once in a very simple manner.

*3. Parents will have a regular subject upon which to examine their children.*

It is much to be desired that family worship were made more instructive than it generally is. The mere reading of the chapter is often too like water spilled on the ground. Let it be read by every member of the family beforehand, and then the meaning and application drawn out by simple question and answer. The calendar will be helpful in this. Friends, also, when they meet, will have a subject for profitable conversation in the portions read that day. The meaning of difficult passages

may be inquired from the more judicious and ripe Christians, and the fragrance of simpler Scriptures spread abroad.

*4. The pastor will know in what part of the pasture the flock are feeding.*

He will thus be enabled to speak more suitably to them on the Sabbath; and both pastor and elders will be able to drop a word of light and comfort in visiting from house to house, which will be more readily responded to.

*5. The sweet bond of Christian love and unity will be strengthened.*

We shall be often led to think of those dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, here and elsewhere, who agree to join with us in reading those portions. We shall oftener be led to agree on earth, touching something we shall ask of God. We shall pray over the same promises, mourn over the same confessions, praise God in the same songs, and be nourished by the same words of eternal life.

Not as a burden, but for the sake of your joy, we invite you to join with your brothers and sisters in reading the Bible together.

It is our prayer that the simplicity of this plan and the encouragement of doing this together will bear good fruit. May we delight in the richness of His Word together!

## **2. Pray for Our Church Family Regularly.**

In addition, we invite you to daily prayer for our church family. In tandem with our Bible reading plan, we will include a daily prayer schedule to lead us in prayer for each of our church's members, ministries, and missionaries once per month. This daily prayer schedule will be included in the bulletin insert on Sunday mornings.

Praying for our church should be an essential part of our life together, and it is our hope that this simple schedule will aid your prayer life.

May it be an encouragement for you to know that you are being prayed for, and a joy to lift up your brothers and sisters in prayer!

## **3. Community**

Last, we invite you to share in all of this together with your brothers and sisters. Share what you are learning, and encourage one another as you meet together in your Community Groups or elsewhere.

Though you may read or pray individually, a unified reading and prayer schedule gives new opportunities for us to share in our life together as a church family. Let us open our hearts to one another, and share how the Lord's grace is at work in our souls through His Word. Let us unite our hearts in prayer for each other!

May it be a great joy to share in the Scriptures and pray for our church family in this new year!

Pastor Ben