

Workshop:

Reading the Bible in Public

Handout 1

Practical advice for reading

- **Legibility:** Make sure you can read the reading. Print it in large print, and practice beforehand.
- **Pace:** Speak slowly. Very slowly. Otherwise, your words will run together. Don't be afraid to pause at key points, and at the beginning and the end of the reading.
- **Volume:** Speak loudly and project, even with a microphone. Read out, not down: imagine your voice is like a ball that you are throwing at the back wall of the church or the space you are gathered in. Use variations in volume to emphasise meaning.
- **Clarity:** Make sure you use your consonants, especially at the end of words.
- **Punctuation:** Pay attention to punctuation: it helps with meaning, and also with where to pause.
- **Intonation:** Use intonation to make sense of what you are reading. Raising and lowering the pitch of your voice helps hold your listeners' attention and emphasises meaning. You might need to mark this on your reading.
- **Pronunciation:** It is easiest to divide the words into syllables. Generally, if there are two vowels together, put one in each syllable, and put a 'y' between them. You might also want to simplify spelling. For example:
 - Melchizedek: Mel-kiz-ed-ek
 - Gibeon: Gi-be-yon
 - Achshaph: Ak-shaf
 - Bethshean: Beth-she-yan
 - Remaliah: Re-ma-lie-yah
 - Syntyche: Sin-ti-key
 - Cenchreae: Ken-kre-ah
 - Capernaum: Ca-per-nay-um
 - Judea: Ju-dee-yah
 - Cretans: Kree-shans

There are lots of guides to pronunciation online, though remember guides from the US will have slightly different pronunciation than we use here in England. And remember that as long as you sound confident, it doesn't really matter how you pronounce things!

- **Look** at your listeners: This helps engage them – you are reading to **them** in particular.
- **Meaning:** Think about the meaning of what you are saying, and how best to convey it to your listeners.
- **Mistakes:** Everyone makes mistakes. Just keep reading. There is no need to stop or apologise.
- **Beginnings and endings:**
 - Contemporary language:
 - Beginning: A reading from [name of book], chapter X.
 - Ending: This is the word of the Lord.
 - Traditional language:
 - Beginning: The Lesson/Epistle is written in the ... chapter of ... beginning at the ... verse.
 - Ending: Here endeth the Lesson/Epistle.