

Growing Together



**Sunday and Mid-Week
Teaching and Discipleship
Programme**

**“Towards Maturity in Christ -
Figuring it out Together”**

June and July 2022

Week Beginning Sunday	Notes	Weekly Theme	Text
June 5 th	Bank Holiday	Love in all things	1 Cor 13
June 12 th		Triumph after death	1 Cor 15v35-58
June 19 th		Ministers of the new covenant	2 Cor 2:12-3:6
June 26 th		Treasure in Clay Jars	2 Cor 4
July 3 rd		New Creations	2 Cor 5:11-21
July 10 th	Church Meeting	Generous Hearts	2 Cor 9:6-15
July 17 th		Suffering for Jesus	2 Cor 11:16-30
July 24 th		Power in Weakness	2 Cor 12:1-10

Use the discussion starters to shape your evening or one of the two patterns below, or a combination of both!

Pattern 1 Listening to voice of God in Life	Pattern 2 Listen to the voice of God in the text
<p>Where and in what ways have you been aware of God this week? What are you grateful to God for?</p> <p>What has prevented you being aware of God? How might you resist these things?</p> <p>In what ways did God encourage you through the Bible text/worship/sermon? In what ways did God challenge you?</p> <p>How is God calling you to respond in your life, relationships, and discipleship to how you have heard his voice in your journey with him this past week?</p>	<p>What stood out for you in the Bible text or sermon? Was there anything new for you?</p> <p>Was there anything that puzzled you or you did not understand?</p> <p>What challenged you in the Bible text or sermon?</p> <p>How is God calling you to respond in your life, relationships, and discipleship to how you have heard his voice in the bible text this past week?</p>

Week Beginning Sunday 5th June 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 1 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Love in all things

Bible Reading : 1 Cor 13

- Share together what struck you in Sunday’s sermon; what new thing did God reveal?
- Is love an emotion or an action?
- v1-3 : Consider the things that Paul says are less important than love. How are each of these connected to the topics mentioned in the previous chapters (11 and 12)? Why is it easy to place more importance on these things than love?
- How do the attitudes and outlook in 13v4-7 compare with the values of the world?
- Do you think living this way together is possible? How does the Holy Spirit help? How might you put some aspect of this description of love into action in church life and relationships.
- What does 13v8-13 promise about the future?
- Why do you think love is greater than either faith or hope (13v13)?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus.
- Pray for the prayer topics in the weekly sheet.
- That love will be put into action in the life of the church.

Week Beginning Sunday 12th June 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 1 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Triumph after death

Bible Reading : 1 Cor 15v35-58

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service.
- What difference does the reality and promise of the resurrection make in or everyday living? Is it just a hope of life after death? Or does it shape living before death?
- v35-49 : How does Paul say nature itself illustrates the transformation of the old body to the resurrection body? Does this make you think about the Christian hope differently?
- Look at v44 – Paul is making the contrast between what animates one type of life compared to another – one by food, drink etc, the other by God’s own Spirit. How does this help us understand the practical difference the resurrection should make in our lives now?
- Paul mentions Adam, plants, animals as well as the sun and moon, referring to Genesis 1. What is he trying to say about the resurrection through this looking back to the creation story?
- Look at v58. You might think Paul might end by saying “let’s rejoice at the wonderful hope we can look forward too!” But he doesn’t. What does he do instead? How can this verse be an encouragement in those times when the work we are doing for the Lord seems futile or too small to make a difference?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- For the hope of resurrection to bring strength in life and hope beyond death. Pray for those who have been recently bereaved.
- Pray v58 in the people and the life of the church

Week Beginning Sunday 19th June 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Ministers of the new covenant

Bible Reading : 2 Cor 2:12-3:6

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service – or what questions it raised for you.
- 2v14-15 – the imagery here is of a Roman triumphal procession following a victory over another nation. Louted treasures would be paraded, along with captured prisoners, some of whom would be publicly executed. It was to make it clear that the Romans were victorious.
- 2v14-15 – What do you find helpful in Paul’s use of this image? Does any of it cause you to be uncomfortable? Is that due to the image or what Paul is trying to communicate. What is this?
- 2v16-17 – How do we share the aroma of Jesus with others? Do you feel equal to such a task? What will give us greater confidence?
- 3v3 – How are we a living letter (or text, email, etc)? In what practical ways can we be ministers of the new covenant, not the letter that kills but the Spirit that gives life?
- 3v4-6 – Where does our confidence come from to share Jesus? How can we rely on God to give it to us? How can we encourage one another?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray through the life of the church in the news sheet.
- For one another to have greater confidence that God is sharing Jesus through you.

Week Beginning Sunday 26th June 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

**Theme : Treasure in clay jars
Bible Text : 2 Cor 4**

- Share together was struck and inspired you in Sunday’s sermon
- 4v1-16 – What does Paul communicate with the image of light in these verses? What does they say about Paul’s job description? How might it shape our life with Jesus?
- 4v7-12 – Paul came come across as a super-Christian, with a faith and life fare beyond ours. But do you think Paul is speaking from the position of hindsight? Look back to what he says in chapter 1v8-9 and compare them to these verses. What is the difference?
- Think back to a time when you have felt crushed and abandoned, but now as you look back, you realise that you were not overcome. How were you actually living out the nature of the gospel in that situation?
- 4v13 quotes Ps 116v10. Look over this Psalm. How does it fit with what Paul says in 4v13-18? How does the Psalm and Paul’s world help us endure the struggles we all face?
- v16-18 : Paul is looking forward to the future resurrection. How does this hope and the words of this chapter help you face the present suffering in your own life that can threaten to overwhelm you and rob you of your hope and heart?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for individuals who are facing struggles. And for the life of the church through a time of continued change. That people will know the truth of Paul’s words in this chapter.

Week Beginning Sunday 3rd July 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : New Creations

Bible Reading : 2 Cor 5v11-21

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service.
- 5v11-12 – Some in the church in Corinth were not impressed by Paul but looked to other leaders who appeared more attractive in outward ways. What is it that impresses us in a church leader? What can we learn from Paul’s words?
- 6v16-17 – How do we look at life and the world differently because of Jesus? How do we look at other people because of Jesus? Is it always easy to see them as new creations? Do you see yourself as new creations?
- 6v17 – What does it look like to be a “new creation”?
- 6v18-21 – In what ways can you live out your calling as a follower of Jesus to be a “minister of reconciliation” like Paul?
- v20b-21 – Who is Paul appealing to here? Unbelievers or believers? If we are to be ministers of reconciliation, how important is keeping our own reconciliation with God fresh and alive?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Share and pray into your relationships with others where you have been a minister of reconciliation.

Week Beginning Sunday 10th July 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Generous Hearts

Bible Reading : 2 Cor 9v6-15

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service.
- Talking about giving money to the church and ministry can be difficult. How is Paul attempting to turn the minds of the Corinthians around and give them a new, bigger pictures of seeing things. How might this motivate people to be generous and cheerful givers?
- Is this passage just about money? What other things do we need to be generous with?
- What can hold you back from giving generously? What part does obedience to God’s call play in cheerful giving?
- v10-11 – Where do we see the resources we have to live on coming from? Our own hard work and skills? Or do we see them as God’s provision. Do we trust enough for this?
- v12-15 – Should our giving support Christian ministries and people only? Or do we need to be generous across a wider range? How does this demonstrate our faith and hope?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Give thanks for the generosity of people in supporting the life of the church
- Remember those who are facing financial struggles.

Week Beginning Sunday 17th July 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Suffering for Jesus

Bible Reading : 2 Cor 11v16-30

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service.
- What characteristics and achievements do we look for in a successful leader?
- Look at v16-29 - How is Paul playing the fool and teasing the Corinthians here regarding what they thought was important? What does it tell us about success as the world celebrates it and from a Christian point of view?
- There was a tradition in the Roman army that when a city was attacked, the first soldier over the wall would be given the honour of “the crown of the wall.” How is Paul drawing upon this example, but also turning it around? What does it tell us about success and failure in the Christian life?
- Speaking of the cross, Henri Nouwen said “The Good News of the gospel ... is not that God came to take our suffering away, but that God wanted to become part of it.” How helpful is this in the face of our sufferings? Should we expect suffering as a Christian to be a normal part of our lives. How have you experienced it? And how has God shared it with you?
- Look at v30 – What weaknesses should we boast in? How might we do this? And are there some weakness in which we shouldn’t boast?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- Pray for people who are suffering because they are Christians
- Pray into the churches search for a new minister

Week Beginning Sunday 24th July 2022

Discussion questions are developed from “For Everyone Bible Study Guides - 2 Cor” by Tom Wright pub by SPCK.

Theme : Power in Weakness

Bible Reading : 2 Cor 12v1-10

- Share together was struck you in Sunday’s sermon and service.
- v1-5 – Paul continues to speak about boasting. He shares a spiritual experience (of “someone,” probably himself) who had an amazing spiritual experience. How can these things be valuable? What can be the downside of making them a focus? How do we navigate between the two?
- What does Paul’s boasting tell us about other leaders who opposed Paul in Corinth? Which style of leader do we value in our society?
- v6-10 – We don’t know what the “thorn in the flesh” was – the best guess is a recurrent illness. What does Paul say was the purpose of this difficulty he faced in life?
- When have you seen God’s “no” to a prayer bring about growth in character, like Paul’s “thorn” did?
- When is it right to accept on-going suffering as part of God’s purpose, and when it is right to pray for God to “take it away”?
- How do we live out the truth of these verses in our everyday lives?

Prayer Focus

- Pray into any of issues that have arisen within your discussions
- Give thanks for anything new you have discovered about Jesus
- That we will build one another up in our faith together.
- For good leadership across our society.