

## St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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### ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER – 12FEB25

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

How are you today? I am thankful for God's grace which can enter our lives in different ways. For me last week, it was grace afforded to me to allow me to be able to speak about of a topic of concern at the national assembly of the church later in the year, it was an unexpected opportunity to meet with my cousin and be encouraged by his faith and being able to be a part of what God is doing at Woodford Presbyterian church's in commissioning a godly man to serving in pastoral ministry.

Today for our encouragement, we look at another part of church we value – Bible Study. Then we will move onto church matters.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT: What We Value – Bible Study

We are considering our Congregation Snapshot over the next number of weeks looking at what we value, what we are doing well and what we need to work on. Today we talk about Bible Study.

Bible Study as we do them in our modern church is not quite the same as it was done during Biblical times. Bible Study happened in the synagogue or temple, or during gathered worship, or in the family context. Neither would they have had a booklet with set questions, but rather a teacher would lead people through the text to understand it and live it. Nevertheless, whatever context it occurs in, it is esteemed and encouraged.

So why study the Scriptures? After Jesus had risen from the dead, he met with his disciples and opened the Scripture for them.

*He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

Luke 24:44-49

Here we see Jesus showing his disciples to understand the Scripture and to see it is all about him. The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms is a way of saying all of Scripture. Jesus shows how it all speaks about him. The Bible is all about Jesus. Every time we study the Bible together it must bring us to Christ, if not, then we are missing the most important point of Scripture – to present Jesus to us. It is this message of Scripture Jesus says is to be declared to all nations, repentance and forgiveness in his name. Our chief goal in studying the Bible is to grow to know Christ more, to be strengthened in faith and to live his way.

An important aspect of Bible study is where it takes us. We can see this in letters like Ephesians where Paul spends 3 chapters laying down doctrine – what we believe about God and Jesus – before moving onto praxis – how it applies to us and shapes our lives. We do not study the Bible just for head knowledge but to live according to the pattern it sets out. God’s truth is to be lived and embodied. This will involve careful thought to how the text applies to your life – reflecting on your life where you are out of step with what the word teaches, setting goals to put it into practice and seeking the Spirit’s power to live God’s word.

It is interesting to observe Ephesians and Colossians. There are parallels between both of these letters, and at the point where Paul writes in Ephesians “Be filled with the Spirit...” (Ephesians 5:18), in Colossians he writes, “Let the word of God dwell in you richly...” (Colossians 3:16). Both are followed by words and actions that accompany being filled with the Spirit and the Word.

We have a number of Bible Studies at Penrith Presbyterian Church. Please call me if you are interested in joining a Bible Study. There are even some people who are hoping to start one on a Wednesday at 5.30pm. There are also online options. Are you in a Bible Study? Which one can you join?

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

*Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

Acts 17:11

As always, love and prayers,  
Steve