

CREATION
FEST

RHYTHMS
OF
FAITH

Scripture

A RHYTHMS GUIDE BY CREATION FEST

APRIL 2023

RHYTHMS OF FAITH

This summer at Creation Fest, we will be exploring Rhythms of Faith. These monthly rhythm guides are designed to explore a particular aspect of what it means for us to walk in daily rhythms. In our second guide, we'll be exploring Rhythms of Scripture. One of our key partners for summer 2023 is The Bible Society who provide excellent resources and tools for going deeper with Scripture.

COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Our prayer is that these guides would enable you to find new ways to rest deep in the rhythm of the created and creating God, the one who has designed us for relationship and is walking daily with us.



A RHYTHMS GUIDE PREPARED BY

Gilbert Lennox and the Creation Fest team
GILBERT LENNOX - MAIN STAGE SPEAKER 2023

RHYTHMS OF REST

in Scripture

At the heart of Matthew's presentation of Jesus as King comes Christ's famous invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." It's an invitation that resonates strongly in our frenetic world and speaks to a deep longing in the human soul for true and lasting rest. For rest was written into Creation from the very beginning. It is fundamental to the rhythms of life and of faith.

This is a rest that is given. It isn't something for which we have to strive. It can't be bought. It isn't merited by privilege or performance. It is a gift, given to all who come to him. To the tired, harassed, burdened, restless. Rest as a gift. Can it be true? What does he mean by rest? And how does a person in 2023 "come" to the King?

But then the King speaks of another rest. Not a rest that we are given this time, but a rest that we are to find. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Finding this rest is conditional not simply on coming to the King, but on taking the King's 'yoke'. Please note the spelling: this has nothing to do with eggs! Rather it has to do with the yoke of his teaching and government. Taking Christ's yoke involves making the deliberate choice, as Mary famously did (Luke 10:38-42), to prioritise time listening to his words, feeding on them, living them. How do we do this? In what ways will this enable us to find rest?

Creation Fest provides a wonderful opportunity to 'get away from it all'. Yet we don't in the end really 'get away from it all'. Either it comes with us or it is certainly waiting for us when we get back. What we really need is rest that is not just for the summer, or for a few hours each week, but rest of heart and mind for every day. Together we will consider the key and deliberate choices involved in receiving and finding rest, especially as regards listening and living in his words. At the heart of a rest-filled life is a living, engaged, two-way relationship with the King himself.

RHYTHMS OF SCRIPTURE

Ways to practise

While many believe that reading the Bible is a 'good thing' to do, they are often not so sure why. And when reading becomes difficult, for whatever reason, they begin to wonder why they should bother. Why not simply leave it to those more gifted than them? Isn't it enough just to listen to a sermon or a podcast once in a while?

Well, listening to (good) Bible teaching is helpful. But here's the thing: no amount of great sermons can take the place of our own personal engagement with God's Word because the main reason we read the Bible is to encounter God himself.

The words of the Bible are not merely ink squiggles on a page (or dots on a computer screen): they are living, God breathed and powerful. Through them God speaks. Not that we should expect to experience an audible voice when we read the Bible. What I mean is that as we come to his Word for ourselves we come with both the prayer and the expectation that God will use it to reveal himself to us and to speak it powerfully into our hearts and lives.

Unfortunately many of us miss this. Instead, we treat the Bible like a car handbook – to be consulted only when there is a problem. And of course, since we all have problems, our Bible reading can easily become dominated by our search for answers to our problems rather than by a desire to encounter God and get to know him.

Alternatively, many of us use the Bible as a source of comforting, positive thoughts to get us through the day, often latching on to favourite verses and ignoring the rest. Or we read it seriously only when (horror of horrors) we have to lead a Bible study or give a talk!

In each case our personal agenda dominates. We don't allow God to set the agenda. Which of course, in addition to being a rather rude way to treat Almighty God, prevents us from truly listening to what he has to say.

Personally, I find it helpful to think of the Bible as a love letter from the Creator to me. This probably makes me sound very old fashioned, for writing love letters has largely been replaced by sending texts and emojis. But just suppose for a moment that I find you sitting alone, deeply immersed in reading and then re-reading a real, hand-written letter (perhaps even on scented paper!) and I ask you what you are doing. You reply that you are reading a letter. "What's the point?" I ask. I then ask you what the point of reading it is, why are you wasting your time like this when you could be doing something more interesting?"

I think you would shake your head sadly and explain: "You don't get it, do you? This is a love letter to me from the most wonderful person in the world. Why wouldn't I be reading it?"

We don't read a love letter to get answers to our problems, or merely to find a few comforting thoughts or to get information to pass on to others. We read a love letter because it comes from someone who loves us and whom we love in return. We read it to get to know the other person better. We set aside our personal agenda and hang on every word. We want to know what this special person is interested in, what his or her ideas are. And we read it again and again to savour and enjoy it.

RHYTHMS OF SCRIPTURE

Ways to practise

So let me suggest – especially if Bible reading has proved difficult – that you start here. The Bible is a personal love letter from the Creator to you personally. Read it to encounter him and to develop your relationship with him. No one else can do this for you. Yes, they can tell you about God, help you in your understanding, share their own experiences – but they can't know God for you.

If the term "Bible Study" puts you off, don't use it! Read the Bible. (Or listen to it read.) Don't skim, or speed read. Read slowly, deliberately. And read the Bible as God caused it to be written: not in isolated 'verse' but as whole books. If you are just getting started, choose a short book – 1 Peter, or Titus or Philippians. And read it right through in one go. Pay attention to your own psychology and find a time and place that suits you best. And then read it again. And again. Multiple times over the course of a week or two. Trust me – you will be amazed at the new things you will notice each time. The words will begin to lodge in your heart and mind where God's Spirit can use them. And you will grow in your knowledge and confidence with God. And if you find you aren't getting anything out of it, read with questions in mind. What appears to be the point and purpose of this book? (Does the author tell us?) What does it tell me about the Divine Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit?). What problems does it address (especially when reading the New Testament letters)? How does it deal with them? And always with the prayer that God will speak into your life through his living Word.

If you would like to discover more about reading the Bible to encounter God then please join me at my afternoon seminar at Creation Fest: Encountering God through his Word

RHYTHMS OF FAITH

3-6 AUGUST 2023
ROYAL CORNWALL EVENTS CENTRE, CORNWALL
CREATIONFEST.ORG.UK

RHYTHMS OF SCRIPTURE

Ways to practise

EXPLORE THE VIDEOS FROM THE BIBLE PROJECT

Since 2014 the Bible Project team have been creating and crafting Bible videos, podcasts, blogs, classes, and educational bible resources to help make the biblical story accessible to everyone everywhere. They have taken the text of Scripture and created visual retellings of various topics like justice, hope, and sacrifice, that help you understand how the whole biblical narrative points towards Jesus.

[EXPLORE THE BIBLE PROJECT VIDEOS](#)

ENGAGE WITH BIBLE FOR LIFE

Engage with 'Bible for Life', developed from Nick Crawley's teaching in the churches he led over thirty years of ministry. It is designed to help men and women engage with Scripture, discover its treasures for themselves, put Jesus' teaching into practice, and live by the Spirit in His kingdom.

[ENGAGE WITH BIBLE FOR LIFE](#)

LISTEN TO BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

Listening to the bible can be a great way to learn more about scripture and ultimately the character of God. Nicky and Pippa Gumbel, the creators of The Alpha Course, have created audio devotionals that not only take you through the entire Bible in just one year but give you their reflections on each verse. It only takes 10 minutes to listen to but can change your whole day. Download their app today.

[DOWNLOAD BIBLE IN ONE YEAR](#)

RHYTHMS OF SCRIPTURE

Ways to practise

WITH FAMILIES

Exploring the rhythms of faith with our families is one of the most important parts of our spiritual journey. Alive Family Worship resources help families set aside precious time to read the Bible together. This resource has ideas on how to read the Bible together, with activities and a crossword.

ALIVE FAMILY WORSHIP - SCRIPTURE DEVO

PARTNERS WHO CELEBRATE

Explore the joy of Scripture with The Bible Course from Bible Society.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY

Learn to Bible journal with Inspire Bible

@INSPIREBIBLE

Pray for IllumiNations as they work to translate Scripture into every language

ILLUMINATIONS

BOOKS TO READ

'How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth'

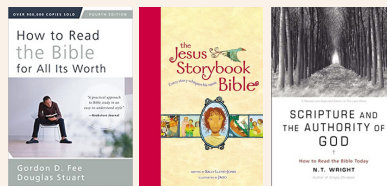
by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart

'The Jesus Storybook Bible'

by Sally Lloyd-Jones illustrated by Wadebridge local Jago

'Scripture and the Authority of God'

by N. T. Wright



SABBATH

Another Sunday morning comes
And I resume the standing Sabbath
Of the woods, where the finest blooms
Of time return, and where no path

Is worn but wears its makers out
At last, and disappears in leaves
Of fallen seasons. The tracked rut
Fills and levels; here nothing grieves

In the risen season. Past life
Lives in the living. Resurrection
Is in the way each maple leaf
Commemorates its kind, by connection

Outreaching understanding. What rises
Rises into comprehension
And beyond. Even falling raises
In praise of light. What is begun

Is unfinished. And so the mind
That comes to rest among the bluebells
Comes to rest in motion, refined
By alteration. The bud swells,

Opens, makes seed, falls, is well,
Being becoming what it is:
Miracle and parable
Exceeding thought, because it is

Immeasurable; the understander
Encloses understanding, thus
Darkens the light. We can stand under
No ray that is not dimmed by us.

The mind that comes to rest is tended
In ways that it cannot intend:
Is borne, preserved, and comprehended
By what it cannot comprehend.

Your Sabbath, Lord, thus keeps us by
Your will, not ours. And it is fit
Our only choice should be to die
Into that rest, or out of it.