

Food for the Journey

One of the things we aim to do as a church is help people to grow in their Christian faith. The word disciple literally means 'a learner' and that is what we are as Christians - people who are learning day by day what it is to follow Jesus and to be more like him. As a church we can help with this process in our preaching, through house groups and through the friendship of fellow Christians on the journey, but we also need to take responsibility for our own learning.

There are some fantastic resources to enable us to do this, so I thought that I would use this first Good News of 2008 to encourage you to make use of them! For example, if you commute to work in the car or by public transport why not use that time to listen to some Christian teaching? Or what about while you do some gardening, spend time in the kitchen or whilst walking the dog? As well as our own sermons from St Stephen's - available from our website! - I would recommend that you get into the habit of listening to the sermons of good preachers. It is now easy with the advent of iTunes and similar to subscribe to a podcast and have them downloaded automatically every week to your PC or MP3 player. What about books?

Well again there are loads of good books to help you with reading the Bible or with prayer for example. There is also software - some for free - to help you to study the Bible - to compare different translations and dig into some of the background. You can also buy CD's and tapes of preachers or Christian books.

There are also some fantastic websites. There is really no excuse for going spiritually hungry as a Christian these days. If you come across a good book or website why not let me know and we can share these resources with one another. I believe that God's is calling us as a church into a deeper relationship with him. As we are transformed by God, we can in turn be agents of transformation in the lives of others and in the communities and networks of which we are part. Remember we are seeking to be a three-dimensional church and people - Fully devoted to loving God and seeking him first (UP); fully devoted to loving each other (IN) and fully devoted to loving our neighbours (OUT) and our ongoing learning and discovering more of God is key to this. See below for some suggestions for starters:

Daily Devotion sites:

www.ucb.co.uk/word_for_today

www.rejesus.co.uk/spirituality/daily_prayer/dailyprayerholder.html

www.northumbriacommunity.org/PraytheOffice/index.html

Books:

Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference? by Philip Yancey

Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith by Rob Bell

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart

How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour by Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart

Recommended Podcast and sermon sites:

www.marshall.org/teaching

<http://sptc.htb.org.uk/godpod>

www.allsouls.org/ascm/allsouls/static/sermons/home.html

www.desiringgod.org

www.thepointchurch.co.uk/members.html

www.ntwrightpage.com

Software:

www.e-sword.net - Windows and Windows mobile

www.laridian.com - for all portable formats including Blackberry and iPod

For fun:

<http://ship-of-fools.com>

www.christiancartoons.com