



The way forward: A time to reflect

As the lockdown begins to ease and we cautiously return to a life without the restrictions of the past year this also gives us opportunities to prepare for the first steps of being an in-person gathered church community again. We have travelled a long and hard road through the pandemic, and it is clear that this journey is not over for all. We will have no doubt experienced much, both helpful and challenging, so it is wise to take time and reflect on these experiences. This new season has afforded us a great opportunity to begin again - starting from scratch - so what can we dream? What is God saying to us about the ministry and mission of GBC? What can we, what should we, do differently?

Over the next 4 weeks we invite you to listen, reflect and pray together, and to seek God's guidance as we begin to emerge into this new world and contemplate how our church can share the good news of Jesus Christ and connect to a world finding its way in this time of recovery.

Beginning on Pentecost Sunday Micky and Gill will share 4 weekly messages at our online services. Each message will focus on a picture and passage of scripture to help us focus our thoughts. Following the message we'll send you a brief study so you can put aside time to reflect and pray. Micky and Gill would love to hear from you - perhaps you could forward us your notes so we can collect them together and look for God's guiding through them.

WEEK TWO

Picture two – THE GARDEN

The vine and the branches

Read: John 15:1-17

Study & reflection

Q. This is a very familiar passage. How do you feel when you hear the passage read out? Does it leave you feeling excited or anxious? Do you ever worry that you aren't producing enough fruit?

Q. What do you think bearing good fruit looks like in the life of the individual Christian? How might we be able to measure this? Is there a way we might be able to help each other to recognise the fruit we see in their lives ?

Q. What do you think a church bearing good fruit might look like? How might we measure fruit that might not be so visible?

Q. Jesus talks about the vine being pruned so that it can bear fruit. What might that pruning look like for us as a church? Are there parts of our life together that, though attractive, aren't producing fruit? How might we discern these areas?

Q. The garden metaphor appears frequently throughout the Bible. When you think about the church as the garden and God as the master gardener, what encourages you most (e.g. each garden is unique, the importance of the seasons, the need for patience etc...)?

Q. As we start meeting together once again in person, we want to be open for God to steer and guide us forward. That may mean making some changes in the way we do things. How do you feel about the potential change?
Does the thought of letting go of familiar ways of doing things fill you with fear or excitement?

Prayer

*Move among us, Spirit,
and gather us together with you.
Take our many selves -
our lives, our loves, our ideas,
our questions, our speech, our silence
and unite us as your people.
Give us the gifts of perception and understanding,
so that even as we dream your dreams and see your visions,
we may be able to witness to your presence
in our common life. Amen.*