

# Dwelling in the Word

## Philippians 1.27-2.13

<sup>27</sup> Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. <sup>29</sup> For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— <sup>30</sup> since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

<sup>2</sup> If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

# How to dwell in the Word

Dwelling in the Word is a process that many people in the Diocese of Oxford are using to listen to scripture, to each other and to God. It's not about sharing information or seeking scholarly answers or even the right answers to the issues raised in the text, but it is about listening each other into free speech and discerning what God is up to amongst us.

Have copies of this sheet available at every meeting so that the verses overleaf can be read by different people each time you meet. You should set aside, without apology, at least 20 minutes for this activity. Dwelling in the Word is far from magical or formulaic; it won't solve all the problems or answer all the questions, difficulties and issues your group, council or committee has to address. However, over time, this discipline forms a community of the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit is as welcome and expected a presence as anyone else there.

- Start with prayer inviting the Spirit to guide your attending to the Word of God.
- When everyone is ready, begin with one person reading the passage out loud to the group.
- Now let some silence unfold as people let the words have their impact. Notice where your attention lingers. This might be a word or a phrase.
- Ask a second person to read the passage out loud once more.
- Each person in the group finds someone they know less well and listens to that person as s/he says what they heard in the passage. What captured their imagination in the passage and what would they like to find out more about? Each person should listen well as they will be asked to report back to the rest of the group (or another pairing if you're a large group) what their partner said.
- What have you heard that might be significant? Discuss as a group what God might be up to in the passage for your group on that day. It can be helpful for the facilitator to make a brief note of what she or he hears from the group and to capture that in a short prayer at the end.
- Finally, let people know that as your conversation on other matters continues, anyone at any time may call for the Gospel and the group will return to the passage.

God of gentleness and love  
Draw near to us as we draw near to you  
Dwell in every heart and conversation  
Fashion in us the likeness of your Son,  
Jesus Christ.

Help us to discern together all that you  
are calling us to be  
And all that you are calling us to do.

Assist us, by your Spirit, to become a  
more contemplative,  
more compassionate and more  
courageous Church  
For the building of your kingdom and  
the glory of your Son.

Amen

Dwelling in the Word is not the only way to study scripture, but if you'd like to find out more then *Dwelling in the Word - A Pocket Handbook* is available to purchase from [churchmissionsociety.org/resources/dwelling-word-pocket-handbook](http://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/dwelling-word-pocket-handbook)

**Dwelling in the Word. So that the Word begins to dwell in you.**