

Dwelling in the Word

The purpose of Dwelling in the Word, is to allow God's Spirit to speak to the church through scripture and each other. It is an exercise in listening to the Holy Spirit, to scripture, and to one another (not to the 'leader'!)

We do the same passage many times, so that as we dwell in the Word, the Word begins to dwell in us. The practice should be used any time groups come together – for example, meetings of church council, committees, planning groups, house groups etc.

The way we Dwell in the Word

Each person is given a copy of the passage in the version being used (normally NRSV).

The Dwelling in the Word prayer is prayed aloud.

One person reads the passage aloud.

While it is being read, each person notices where their attention is drawn – a word, a phrase, a sentence. It may be something new, something puzzling, something affirming.

Have a few minutes silent reflection.

A different person reads the passage aloud again.

Everyone pairs up (if possible, with someone they know less well or not at all). Each one shares briefly with their partner what caught their attention.

In larger groups, or as the whole assembled group, each person shares what they heard their partner say.

Acts 8:26-40 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.