

## Further Steps – Week 3 – Disciplines of the New Life

### Connect and review

Again, take the chance to review prior learning with the group – what stood out? What has really lasted with you? What have you been able to put into practice? What have you found challenging? Encourage participants to elaborate on their understanding by posing 'how' and 'why' questions.

In the last session we saw that all who decided to follow Jesus under the inspired preaching of the Apostle Peter were baptised. But there were some other things that the early Christians practiced, that are part of the basics of our faith – and we are going to explore them today.

To start with, let's read Acts 2 verses 41-42.

### Inspire and engage

There are four sections here – don't feel you have to rush through them – take time to present each one and leave some space for reflections and clarification.

Scriptures can be found at the bottom of these notes.

#### 1. **Learning** ("They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching").

For a while, new Christians were able to hear from the apostles (those who had been closest to Jesus during His ministry) about the things Jesus did and taught. Those apostles are, of course, long gone. But we have the teaching they and others have written down, which has become *The New Testament*. The earlier teaching of prophets and others (*The Old Testament*) has been added to this to give us the *Bible* that we can read today. (sometimes called the *Scriptures* – meaning 'writings').

Reading: [2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3 verse 16](#).

Question 1: Why is it important we should be diligent learners of the Bible?

#### 2. **Meeting Together** ("... the fellowship").

Reading: [Hebrews 10 verse 25](#).

At Renewal we have several opportunities to meet together regularly. Meeting to worship God on Sundays is of first importance and should take priority over other Sunday activities whenever possible, but there are other opportunities in the week, and when we can't make it in person, we can connect online.

Question 2: Why is it important to worship God with others?

#### 3. **Communion** ("... the breaking of bread").

Reading: [1 Corinthians 11 verse 23-26](#).

*Comment:* In case we forget that it cost Jesus His life to save us, by dying on a wooden cross, Jesus gave instructions to copy what He did at His last supper when he gave bread and wine to His disciples. The bread represents His crucified body and the wine represents His shed blood.

Question 3: In what ways does Communion suggest the following?

- The death of Jesus.
- Christ's return.
- The body of Christ.
- The blood of Christ.

Question 4: Communion is sometime called *the eucharist*, from the Greek for 'thanksgiving'. Why do you think it is called this?

#### 4. **Prayer.**

Reading: [Ephesians 6 verse 18](#).

*Comment:* In the previous session we saw that when we are born again we become God's children (John 1 verse 12). What could be more natural than children should speak to their father – in this case, to our Heavenly Father?

Keeping in touch with our Father (either directly or speaking to Jesus) should be something we do every day as individuals – indeed several times a day as needs and opportunities arise. But there is something special about praying with other Christians. When we say “amen” at the end of corporate prayers, we are using a Greek word of Hebrew origin, meaning “so be it”, and it signifies “I agree with what has just been said”.

### Explore and apply

The apply section is most important here – give examples of what this may look like from your own life/community. You may want to reference the Prayer document also found in the toolkit which explores different ways to pray.

#### Explore

*Exercise:* Which of the following are true?

- a) The New Testament was written by Jesus.
- b) The authors of the Bible had all been close companions of Jesus.
- c) An important way of learning how to follow Jesus is reading the Bible.
- d) “Fellowship” describes Christians meeting together.
- e) Worship is one reason for Christians to meet together.
- f) Worship is the only valid reason for Christians to meet together.
- g) Communion represents the death of Jesus on the cross.
- h) The practice of Communion was invented by the Pope.
- i) Christians should only pray when together with others.
- j) Christians can pray wherever they are.

*Discussion:* What other things is it desirable for Christians to do together?

#### Apply:

How can I arrange my life around these four basic Christian activities (Bible reading, Fellowship, Communion and Prayer.)?

### Reflect and review

Again, be sensitive – and try and encourage attendees to see what they are already doing that they may not realise, such as having a whats-app conversation with a Christian friend (fellowship) etc.

*Personal reflection:* what is fantastic about the way that I am living now? Is there anything that I can change, any habits I can add, to become more like Jesus?

*Suggested activity:* take some time during the week to read your Bible, or study a bit deeper if you already regularly do this. Share something you read next session when we come back!

### SCRIPTURES for Session 3

*Acts 2:41-42.* Those who accepted (Peter’s) message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (NIV)

*2 Timothy 3:16.* All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

*Hebrews 10:26.* let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

*1 Cor 11:23-26.* I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.” In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people — an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.” For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

*Ephesians 6:18.* pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.



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