

READING THE LESSONS IN CHURCH

Some Guidelines



First of all, remember that reading in Church is both a MINISTRY and a PRIVILEGE. At one time in the Church's history, to be a 'Lector' (i.e. a reader of the Scriptures) was, in fact, an ordained Ministry. So it is something which should be prepared for as well as possible, both for the good of the reader, and the good of those who are being read to.

So, some guidelines...

Be prepared! Always come to the lectern knowing what you are going to read. You will have (or should have!) been given the Reading in good time. This will be in the form and version that you will be expected to read on the day. Read over your reading several times, so you know where the natural pauses come. Check any 'funny' words or names with one of the Chaplains if necessary.

CHECK YOUR READING IN THE LECTIONARY (the big book on the Lectern) when you come into Church. Make sure the Lectionary is at the correct page!

If you usually sit towards the back of Church, you might consider sitting somewhere nearer the front if you are reading! Or you might, for instance, discretely move towards the front of Church during the singing/saying of the *Gloria*, so you are ready to read without any undue delay.

ALWAYS READ FROM THE LECTIONARY IF POSSIBLE:

it is actually set out in a way to help with phrasing.

Even if you have the help of a mic, **SPEAK CLEARLY**, with **GOOD VOLUME**, and **SLOWER THAN YOU MIGHT EXPECT! Don't rush!** Even people with good hearing (and not everybody has!) can find it difficult to hear, depending on the acoustics of the building, so **TAKE YOUR TIME**.

ANNOUNCING THE READINGS

PLEASE announce your Reading as it is introduced in the Lectionary: e.g.

'A reading from the Prophet Isaiah': or 'A reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians'. It is **NOT NECESSARY** to announce chapter and verse: the congregation have the Readings printed out for them, so they know the chapters and verses already!

At the end of the Reading pause for a couple of seconds, and then say,
'This is the word of the Lord' – in as clear a voice as you used for reading.

THE READING OF THE PSALM (where one is used)

The Psalms are the hymn book of the Old Testament, and so ideally should be sung. Their liturgical use in Christian worship (and in our Chaplaincy!) varies from place to place...so...

In a congregation which says the Psalm 'responsorially':

Announce the Psalm by saying:

The Response to the Psalm is... and say the Response.

There is no need to announce the Psalm number.

The Congregation should then repeat the Response; you then read the next section of the Psalm up to the next Response. It is a good 'cue' to the Congregation if you **LOOK UP** at them when the Response is due (but don't lose your place!). You will also say the Response with the Congregation.

As from August 2022 the words of the Psalm on the Pew Readings will be the same as the words in the large Lectionary, so there is no need for the Psalm to be printed out separately.

Where the Psalm is NOT said 'responsorially':

Announce the Psalm as ***'Verses from Psalm....'*** - say number, and then continue reading.

Whatever is the local arrangement, please **DO NOT SAY**

'This is the word of the Lord' at the end of the Psalm (and **NEVER Amen!**)

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These guidelines are to help you – and your hearers – to benefit as well as possible from reading and hearing the Word of God in our worship. Remember: **WORSHIP = WORTH-ship**;

and it is always our duty, and our joy, in whatever capacity, to offer our best to God in our worship.