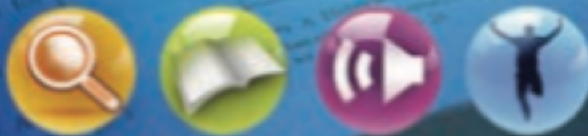


HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Luke 18¹ – 19¹⁰

Work Book

Hearing the Word Luke 18:1 – 19:10

Work Book

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Web Edition

Published by Nigel Barge, Torrance, August 2018

ISBN 978-1-912209-54-5

(Matching Leader's Guide ISBN 978-1-912209-55-2)

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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Phil and June Malloch, whose tireless editing, reviewing and pulling together of materials has enabled the 'Hearing the Word' resource to be shared with the wider church.

Nigel Barge, August 2018

Scripture Quotations taken from

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

www.blueletterbible.org

Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



LOOK – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
 - a) What questions does it raise -
Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
 - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
 - a) the surrounding text
 - b) the Book of the Bible
 - c) the whole Bible
 - d) the place in the Bible Story



LEARN – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



LIVE – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace*
 - c) Jesus / his salvation**
- 2) What should I do?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27)

Reading Narrative

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. Luke is mainly *narrative* (story), the most common type, seasoned with *teaching* and *parable*. To approach narrative correctly we need to keep these principles in mind.

1 In General: It is *God's* story

The whole Bible recounts the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and the fall in Genesis, the rest describes how God works out his unfolding plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus. The OT prepares for the arrival, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The NT recounts these and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about Jesus. Therefore:

a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

So as we read, we should be asking – ‘what does this show about Jesus; what is He doing?’

b) Everything is relevant.

In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often we are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read Bible narrative – knowing how it ends – we should be asking ‘what relevance has *this* part of the story to the *main* story?’

2 In particular: ‘Follow the camera angle’

A film director focuses the viewer's attention on particular shots to tell ‘his story’. In the same way each narrator in the Bible is selective about what to tell us. They leave out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what they are trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question, ‘Why is he telling me this and in this particular way?’

3 Warts and all

Human beings often get things wrong. The Bible narrative faithfully records errors, even by people who are elsewhere commended. For instance, Moses murdered a man, King David committed adultery, and Peter, who was praised for realising Jesus was the Christ, was minutes later roundly scolded when he tried to stop Jesus being the Christ through suffering! (Exodus 2:12; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 16:16-23)

So we can't treat every thought or action in a narrative as something to copy, just because ‘it's in the Bible’. We must ask the Holy Spirit to use the rest of Scripture to discern good examples to follow, and bad ones to avoid.

Background to Luke's Gospel

The Author

Luke was a doctor and friend of the apostle Paul, who calls him 'the beloved physician' and 'fellow worker' (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24). He began to travel with Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10). He was close to Paul near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11).

He may have come from Antioch in Syria, or Troas, or Philippi in Macedonia. He was a Gentile (i.e. not a Jew). Indeed he is the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament.

He had carried out careful research (see Luke 1:3, 2:51). He also wrote the story of the early church in the 5th book of the New Testament, whose full title is: 'The Acts of the Apostles'. It takes us up to Paul's imprisonment in Rome but not his trial, suggesting Luke finished writing it before that event.

The Date of writing

Luke wrote his gospel before writing Acts (*see* Acts 1:1) probably before 63AD

The structure

A	The introduction	(1: 1 - 4)
B	The birth of Jesus	(1:5 - 2:52)
C	The start of Jesus' ministry	(3:1 - 4:13)
D	Jesus in Galilee	(4:14 - 9:50)
E	From Galilee to Jerusalem	(9:51 - 19:44)
F	Jesus in Jerusalem	(19:45 - 21:38)
G	The death of Jesus	(22:1 - 23:56)
H	The resurrection of Jesus	(24:1 - 53)

So this volume of *Hearing the Word* comes last in Section E

Its purpose

Matthew and Mark probably wrote their gospels before Luke. Unlike them Luke had not himself witnessed Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, but he'd had personal contact with many eyewitnesses who had. He addresses both his Gospel and Acts to someone called Theophilus. This may have been a real individual: could he have been an official in Roman government?... Someone who wanted details of Christianity before Paul's trial in Rome?... Someone who paid Luke's expenses while writing? Actually, the name means, 'friend of God', so it might refer to anyone, in any time or place, who *wanted to know the Gospel and be a friend of God*.

The Themes

Five themes keep re-occurring in Luke's Gospel:

1 Salvation

a) a historical event

Jesus Christ's coming to earth as a man is the centre point of history. Luke points out the exact time and situation of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2). Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem (9:51) where he completes his work, commits his Spirit to the Father, and dies (23:46). On the third day he rises from death. Forty days later, having promised to return, he ascends to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Meantime, the Good News of this salvation is offered to all by the power of the Spirit (Acts 2:38,39).

b) for all mankind

From the announcement by the angels of 'good news ... for all people' (2:10) to the genealogy of Jesus stretching back to Adam (3:38), it is clear the non-Jews are included too. This does not deny the importance of Israel. Luke begins and ends his Gospel with people in Jerusalem and shows it to be the ultimate destination of Jesus' earthly ministry (1:8; 2:22, 36; 9:51-53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28).

2 The 'outsiders'

Luke shows that people seen as 'weak' are equally welcome in the Kingdom of God, by recording Jesus' interaction with them. This includes:

a) Women

Women are central to the story. At the beginning, the angelic announcement of His birth was to Mary (1:26-38) and at end, the truth of His resurrection was given first to the women at the tomb (24:1-11). He ministered to women in various settings (7:11; 7:37; 13:11; 21:1-4) and it was women who helped finance Him and His apostles (8:2-3).

b) Children

The accounts of Jesus' birth show the importance and value of a child from the womb (1:41!). At various times he intervenes to heal the child of a distraught parent (7:12; 8:42; 9:38).

c) The poor

Jesus himself was from Nazareth (4:16) – a poor, insignificant town (John 1:46). His birth was to an unmarried girl and witnessed by the 'outcasts' of society, the shepherds (2:8-20). The offering at His birth was that of the poor (2:24; Leviticus 12:8) and the message he preached was for the poor (4:18; 7:22). He died with common criminals (23:32,41).

d) Gentiles

Luke, himself a Gentile, is writing to another Gentile, Theophilus (1:3). He records the faith of a Gentile Roman Centurion: of him, Jesus says he had ‘not found such great faith in Israel’ (7:9). Possibly out of deference to his non-Jewish readership, Luke seldom quotes the Old Testament.

3 The Holy Spirit

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is explicit throughout the Gospel, in:

a) the birth of John the Baptist (1:15,41,57) **b)** the conception of Jesus (1:35)
c) Simeon’s prophecy about Jesus (2:25-27) **d)** John’s promise that Jesus would ‘baptise with the Holy Spirit’ (3:16) **e)** the baptism of Jesus (3:22) **f)** the temptations of Jesus (4:1) **g)** the power of Jesus’ ministry (4:18) **h)** the joy of the Spirit (10:21) **i)** the promise of the Spirit for His followers (11:13; 12:10-12; 24:49), fulfilled at Pentecost, as Luke records in Acts 2.

4 The humanity of Jesus

There is no clearer way of demonstrating Jesus’ humanity than noting his recourse to prayer. Through this he shows:

- a) his own dependence on the Father through prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46).
- b) his identification with his disciples, as He similarly instructs them in prayer through:
 - i) parables - the friend at midnight (11:5-13) the unjust judge (18:1-8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:10-14)
 - ii) teaching on prayer (6:28; 11:2; 22:40, 46)

5 The deity of Jesus

Luke presents Jesus as God in an *oblique* way. This fact was not acknowledged at that time. This is the key theme of the first 5 chapters:

1:17 John prepares for the Lord	4:41 the Son of God
1:32 called Son of the Most High	5:8 the Holy presence
1:43 Mary mother of ‘my Lord’	5:13 able to cleanse an individual
2:11 Saviour who is Christ the Lord	5:20 a forgiver of sin
2:49 in ‘His Father’s house’	5:32 (righteous one) calling sinners to repentance
3:22 God says ‘you are my Son’;	5:34 the bridegroom
4:34 The Holy one of God	

Study 1

Luke 18: 1-8

Pray faithfully for the King to return.

Background

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. (17:11) and the confrontations with the Pharisees are building up. In ch.17 he tells the disciples they will not know in advance the time of his second coming.

The judge in the parable is not a Jewish judge (disputes were normally taken before the elders and not into public courts.) He would have been a paid magistrate appointed either by Herod or by the Romans. Such judges were notoriously corrupt. **n.b.** The parable does not *liken* God to the unjust judge; it *contrasts* God to such a person.

The Jewish custom was to pray only three times a day at the most, as did Daniel (Daniel 6:10), in case they wearied God.

Word List

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 3 | <i>'justify'</i> | Greek <i>ekdikeson</i> root same as greek <i>dikaio</i> s - 'righteous'
Luke 23:47; c.f. Romans 3:10; 4:3,5 |
| 4 | <i>wear me out</i> | literally 'give a black eye' – used here metaphorically! |
| 7 | <i>'keep putting them off'</i> | The Greek is difficult. It may mean 'though he bear long with them' or may be from a Semitic expression, 'He postpones his wrath'. |
| 7 | <i>'Chosen ones'</i> | Unusual word – refers to 'children of Jacob'
(1Chronicles 16:13, Psalm 105:6) |
| | <i>day and night</i> | The only use of this phrase in all 4 Gospels |
| 8 | <i>quickly</i> | In terms of God's time – see 2 Peter 3:8 |
| | <i>Son of Man</i> | Title Jesus used of himself, emphasising his humanity. |

Bible Connections

Story with a similar point - Luke 11:5-8

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | <i>persistent prayer</i> | see 11:5-8; Acts 1:14; Romans 1:10, 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 |
| 2 | <i>not fearing God or man</i> | contrast with 2 Corinthians 8:21 |
| 3 | <i>widow</i> | see Deuteronomy 16:11; Psalm 68: Luke 21:1-4 |
| 7 | <i>God listens to those who cry to him</i> | see Exodus 22:23; Psalm 88:1; Rev 6:10 |
| 8 | <i>coming of Son of Man</i> | see Matthew 16:27 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace?
 - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Be humble!

Background

Luke does not identify by name any particular group to whom this parable applied. The error is typical of the Pharisees but by no means confined to them. It would be normal to see a Pharisee in the temple but surprising to see a tax collector there. Tax collectors were regarded as dishonest and betrayers of their own countrymen.

Word List

9	<i>righteous</i>	Greek, <i>dikaïos</i> , same root of words as 'justice' (3,5,8,14)
11	<i>stood</i>	This was the normal posture for prayer <i>see</i> Mark 11:25.
12	<i>fast twice a week</i>	Although the Law (Torah) only required fasting on the Day of Atonement ie once a year.
	<i>give a tenth</i>	Law only said that certain crops be tithed. Pharisees tithed even tiny crops like garden herbs (Luke 11.42).
13	<i>look up to heaven</i>	Normal in Jewish prayer then
	<i>beat his breast</i>	The verb is continuous, <i>kept beating</i> ; a sign of sorrow.
	<i>have mercy on me</i>	Greek <i>hilastheti</i> meaning 'be propitiated' or 'let your anger be removed' i.e. He knows he deserves judgment for his sins.
14	<i>justified</i>	reckoned as righteous, 'acquitted of his sins'

Bible Connections

9	<i>confident of own righteousness...</i>	<i>see</i> 16:15, Isaiah 65:5
	<i>going to the temple to pray</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 3:1
12	<i>fasting required</i>	<i>see</i> Leviticus 16:29
	<i>tithing required</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 14:22
13	<i>beating breast, sign of repentance</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 66:2; Jeremiah 31:19; Luke 23:48
	<i>God have mercy on me.</i>	<i>see</i> 5:32; 1 Timothy 1:15

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Receive Jesus like a child.

Background

Jesus was talking to those who were confident of their own righteousness (18:9) and follows on from the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. It gives a contrast to the Pharisee by speaking of babies and little children.

It was the custom in Palestine for mothers to bring their child to some distinguished rabbi on their first birthday that he might bless them.

It is not clear here why the disciples rebuked those who brought the children. Jesus shows that he welcomes them.

Word List

15 *touch them* In the sense of 'lay hands on them', a natural action in blessing

Bible Connections

See also Matthew 18:2-4; 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16

15 *Jesus' rebuke* Fever (4:39), Demons (4:41; 9:42), wind (8:24) James and John's vengeance (9:55)

17 *I tell you the truth* (KJV – 'verily') In Luke associated with Jesus' second coming, judgment, glory (4:24; 11:51; 12:37; 13:35; 18:29; 21:22; 23:42)

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- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 4 Luke 18: 18-30

Count the cost/Receive the Lord

Background

In his gospel, Luke uses the term ‘rulers’ for a group of people that differed from the elders, scribes and high priests.

Jesus replies to the ruler’s question with one of His own (a recognised method of teaching) to invite the man to think more deeply about what he was saying and asking.

The rabbis held that the Law could be kept in its entirety. It was also commonly held that riches were a sign of God’s blessing, so the rich had the best chance of good things in the next world as well as enjoying them in this life.

Word List

18	<i>ruler</i>	A very general term denoting Roman and Jewish officials of all kinds
	<i>good teacher</i>	Thoughtless flattery, a term not used by the rabbis because it ascribed to man an attribute possessed only by God
	<i>inherit</i>	<i>i.e.</i> Receive the ‘gift’ from another (n.b. - not earned)
26	<i>who</i>	<i>i.e.</i> ‘who (of any kind)?’ not ‘what rich man?’
28	<i>Peter</i>	One of the 12 disciples, Jesus’ close followers

Bible Connections

c.f. with Luke 10:25-37

20	<i>Commandments 5-9</i>	<i>see</i> Exodus 20:12-16; Deuteronomy 5:16-20; Romans 13:9
22	<i>sell ... give to the poor</i>	<i>c.f.</i> Acts 2:45
	<i>treasure in heaven</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 6:19-20
24	<i>hard for rich to enter heaven</i>	<i>see</i> Proverbs 11:28
28	<i>Peter and apostles. left all...</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 4:19-20
29	<i>God supplies all our needs</i>	<i>see</i> Philippians 4:19

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Listen to God and seek understanding from Him

Background

Jesus tells the twelve disciples what is going to happen to Him in Jerusalem. They do not understand because they did not know/realise the meaning of much of their Scriptures (our Old Testament).

They thought from Psalm 110 that the Messiah would be a conquering hero; they had not grasped He was also the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

On *six* previous occasions, Luke has recorded Jesus predicting his sufferings: Luke 5:35; 9:22,44-45; 12:50; 13:32-35; 17:25, but even now they still do not get it. This is the first time He explains that His suffering will involve being handed over to the Gentiles.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 31 | <i>the Twelve</i> | Jesus' close followers, whom he had chosen to be with him |
| | <i>Jerusalem</i> | The capital and centre of religious life and government |
| | <i>the prophets</i> | Our Old Testament Scriptures |
| | <i>Son of Man</i> | Title Jesus often used of Himself, emphasises His humanity |
| 32 | <i>Gentiles</i> | <i>i.e.</i> The Romans, the non-Jewish rulers of the country |
| 33 | <i>third day</i> | Marks a complete change in general terms |

Bible Connections

See also Acts 2:22-24

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--|
| 31 | <i>going up to Jerusalem</i> | <i>see</i> Luke 9:51; Matthew 16:21 |
| | <i>written by the prophets</i> | <i>see e.g.</i> Psalm 22; Isaiah 53
Jonah 2/Matthew 12:40 |
| | <i>Son of Man</i> | <i>see</i> Daniel 7:13 |

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- 2) What should I do?

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A blind beggar receives his sight

Background

Crowds were following Jesus as He journeyed towards Jerusalem. Rabbis often taught their followers by talking as they walked along together.

As He approached Jericho before heading west to Jerusalem, a blind man heard the commotion and asked who was coming. Given his reaction, he must have already heard something about Jesus and his ministry.

Word List

35	<i>Jericho</i>	City near the river Jordan, c 800ft below sea level A curse had been placed on any who would rebuild it after its destruction by Joshua. (Joshua 6:26) (Jerusalem was 2600ft above sea level – a hard journey of 8/9 hours.)
37	<i>Nazareth</i>	Jesus lived in Nazareth, a small town in Galilee, until he started his ministry. (<i>c.f.</i> 4:16)
38	<i>called out</i> <i>Son of David</i>	The word describes a normal, loud shout. Title the Jews used to refer to the long-awaited Messiah. Luke, writing with Gentiles in mind, uses it only once more; Matthew, writing mainly for a Jewish audience, uses it more often.
39	<i>rebuked</i> <i>shouted all the more</i>	Harsh censorship <i>c.f.</i> Jesus and demons (4:41; 9:42) Different verb from v38, indicating a shout of utter desperation – <i>c.f.</i> ‘bellowed’
42	<i>heal</i>	Greek <i>Sozo</i> – heal or save (<i>e.g.</i> 19:10)

Bible Connections

See also Mark 10:46-52 Mark names the blind man as Bartimaeus, who was healed as Jesus *left* Jericho.

Matthew 20:29-34 *Two* blind men

38 *Son of David* *see* Ezekiel 34:23; Psalm 89:28-37; 132:11,12; David was from Bethlehem 1 Samuel 17:12 - Micah 5:2.
Matthew 1:1,6; 12:23; 21:9; 22:41-45; // Luke 20:41

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- 2) What should I do?

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Study 7

Luke 19: 1-10

God welcomes the repentant sinner

Background

Jericho was on an important trade-route from Jerusalem to the East and there was a good deal of local wealth *e.g.* from the famous balsam groves in the area.

The Romans operated a taxation system to pay for government, army and road-building. They took a census of the population, divided the needed income by that number, and held an auction. The highest bidder paid that year's taxes in advance, and then held the right to extract money from the population, backed by Roman soldiers to enforce payment.

He could then subcontract to several others who did the actual gathering of money (*e.g.* Matthew, before he became a disciple of Jesus: Luke 5:27; Matthew 9:9). Zacchaeus was a 'Chief' tax collector. The system lent itself to unscrupulous people who saw it as a chance to take more than the official rate. They wanted to recover their outlay, plus gain enough to live on and outbid next year's competitors.

Under Jewish law, robbery with violence needed a four-fold restitution: if you killed someone else's sheep you had to pay back four sheep (Exodus 22:1; 2 Samuel 12:6). But for voluntary confession and restitution after fraud (as here) you had to pay back the original amount plus only one fifth (Leviticus 6:5; Numbers 5:7).

Word List

2	<i>Zacchaeus</i>	Hebrew name meaning 'pure' or 'righteous'
	<i>chief tax collector</i>	Probably head of the local taxation department
4	<i>running (and climbing)</i>	Very undignified for Jewish man
	<i>sycamore-fig tree</i>	Very closely related to the mulberry tree, with spreading branches easy to climb
5	<i>I must stay</i>	A strong expression
9	<i>son of Abraham</i>	A true Jew who follows the faith of Abraham
10	<i>lost</i>	In the wrong place (Luke 15:4,8,32)

Bible Connections

7	<i>guest of a 'sinner'</i>	<i>see also</i> Matthew 9:11
8	<i>Law required – for violent theft - four times</i>	<i>see</i> Ex 22:1
	<i>- for voluntary restitution original - one fifth</i>	Lev 6:5; Numbers 5:7
10	<i>seek and save the lost</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 53:11; John 1:29; 3:17

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace?
 - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Sharing the Word

Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. *

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

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