

121

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

Acts 8:29-31

Will you accept the Challenge?!

Most people, believe it or not, are strangers to reading the Bible. Everyone knows it's 'a religious book' but few understand it has one central and distinct story to tell. Once you get on the trail and know what to look for it's a wonderfully exciting and infinitely rewarding read.

The recent Lent Course impressed upon me again what a simple yet powerful thing it was which unleashed the power to plant and grow our Lord's church. The apostles and early disciples simply told His story in the simplest and most straightforward way they could. The Holy Spirit did the rest!

³⁴...And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

Acts 8:34-35

121 Bible Reading & Discussion of Mark's Gospel is an attempt to harness the power, simplicity and thrill the early Christians found in sharing Jesus' by telling his story.

The challenge laid down to us as a church is that each of us should find a way to meet one-to-one with

someone regularly to read successive bits of Mark's Gospel and talk about what they have read. It could be in your back garden, over Zoom, in a coffee shop, in a pub, your front room or wherever you can share time, space and opportunity together. It's not meant to be a time to preach or persuade but to **reflect** and **chat** together about the **reality, meaning** and **significance** of what you read together. Just be honest and enjoy the conversation – and the beverage!

"Not me! I could never do it!" "I don't know anyone to ask!" "I don't think I'd have the courage to ask!". Yes, you could, I bet there is someone and the **121** scheme can make it easy for you!

Pray about who you might ask – they're probably very close to you, across the road, someone you visit or work with, and old friend or someone in the family. Someone it would be fun to meet regularly with over a coffee, beer, lunch, snack or glass of wine! You could even take it in turns to bake for each other!

Asking is easy: *"George! We've got this thing going on at church whereby we've all been challenged to meet with a friend regularly to read a book of the Bible together – Mark's Gospel. I didn't know who to ask and then thought of you. Can we give it a go?"*

At 9.00am weekday Facebook morning prayers, Robin and I are going to be reading through bite sized chunks of Mark's Gospel once we finish the book of Acts. Each chunk can later be found as part of the recorded prayers on the Emmanuel with St Paul's Facebook page. You could use it as background info for your conversations – but don't preach it. Remember, it's not meant to be a time to preach or unduly persuade, but to **reflect** and **chat** together about **reality, meaning** and **significance**.

Email in karldesk@blueyonder.co.uk if you want to ask anything about what you're reading - it's always good to admit things which baffle you and get back to people on the issue – it shows an integrity.

Keep in touch about how you get on! More to follow in the meantime, get praying and asking!

Rev Karl