

THE COMMUNITY OF ST CUTHBERT

# ST CUTHBERT

Study Guide for  
Spiritual Growth  
Groups

JUNE 2022 - JULY 2022

# **The Community of St Cuthbert: *Spiritual Growth Group* Study Guide June – July 2022**



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**Group Leaders** have all received copies of the ‘Leaders’ Guide and Programme for 2022’, and can pass this on to interested members.

That Leaders’ Guide includes all the general information about the Community of St Cuthbert. This present leaflet contains only the session (study) guides. A new feature this time is ‘Digging Deeper’ questions that some group leaders asked for – these are optional!

## Calendar

### June – July 2022

The suggested pattern for this period is:

- (1) 6 – 10 Jun After Pentecost – Study
  - (2) 13 – 17 June Prayer and Praise (after Trinity Sunday)
  - (3) 20 – 24 June Bible Study
  - (4) 27 June – 1 July Acts of Service
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- (1) 4 – 8 July Bible Study
  - (2) 11 – 15 July Prayer and Praise
  - (3) 18 – 22 July Bible Study
  - (4) 25 – 29 July Celebration and Review

### Looking Ahead

There will be no notes provided for **August**, when many groups stop meeting. We encourage you to try to arrange a social get together at some point in the month.

Our next CSC Study Day is on Sat 10th Sept, in St Nics church from 10am – 12.30pm, on the theme of *Learning Prayer from the book of Psalms*  
All welcome! Further details on booking in nearer the time.

Richard Briggs  
Prior, CSC

## **Session 1 – Pentecost (study)**

### **Acts 2:1-21**

*Thinking about the passage:*

- What can ‘tongues of fire’ (v.3) suggest to us about the Holy Spirit?
  - What might be significant about the *international* aspect of this story? (vv.5-11)
- Peter says (verse 16) that they are witnessing the fulfilment of the prophet Joel – quoting Joel 2:28-32. What questions would people like to ask about the Joel prophecy?

*Thinking about our lives in the light of the passage:*

- What experience do people have of God being praised in other languages?
  - What does this story show us about fear and boldness? What situations might that relate to in our own lives?

*(For groups wanting to probe deeper:)*

- Some say the Pentecost miracle is a kind of reversal of the ‘tower of Babel’ story in Genesis 11:1-9. Compare the passages and reflect on how this Acts 2 story engages with some of the issues raised in Genesis 11. In what ways could this be significant?

What other questions about the passage do people in the group have? If you heard a sermon on it this past Sunday, discuss any insights or reflections.

## **Session 2 – Prayer and Praise**

### **Trinity Sunday (12th June) – Proverbs 8:1-4,22-31 and John 16:12-15**

- Read the passages listed above and share any insights or reflections.
- Were there helpful pointers in the sermons this week?
  - What questions would people like to explore about the doctrine of the Trinity? (many of our questions may not be answerable!)

*Praise:* this is a good week to praise God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What hymns or worship songs (to sing or to listen to) might help the group in this?

*Prayer:* make a focus of your time together this week praying for one another

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### **Session 3 – Bible Study**

#### **Luke 8:26-39**

*Thinking about the passage:*

- Who initiates the encounter between Jesus and the demon-possessed man? (Is the passage clear on this?)
- What is the significance of the pigs? – in terms of their symbolic uncleanness and/or their economic significance? Or anything else?
- What do you make of the people's response (v.37) and Jesus' final instructions to the man (v.38-39)?

*Thinking about our lives in the light of the passage:*

- How does the story speak to us if we identify with (a) Jesus (b) the possessed man (c) the crowds? Which perspective did different people most identify with at first?

*(For groups wanting to probe deeper:)*

- The area this story takes place in is described as the region of the 'Gerasenes' (or 'Gadarenes') – it is North East from where most gospel stories take place, across the sea of Galilee, in Roman-occupied territory. Also, the man gives his name as 'Legion' in verse 30. In what ways might this story be partly about how Jesus' power confronts the dehumanising force of the Roman Empire, in all its 'uncleanness'?

What other questions about the passage do people in the group have? If you heard a sermon on it this past Sunday, discuss any insights or reflections.

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## **Session 4 – Acts of Service**

Sunday's passage was **Luke 9:51-62**, on following Jesus.

- Have each person share something that strikes them about the passage, or a question it raises for them. This can lead into practical reflection together on how we may be demonstrating love in acts of service.

Group leaders will be able to refer groups to resources and ideas for missional acts of service, in the Leaders' Guide. If the group meets in its usual time slot this week, use the chance to review its activities or commitments to justice and service.

## **July 2022**

Our studies in July switch to some of the passages being used for our evening sermon series on Mark's Gospel

### **Session 1 – Bible Study**

#### **Mark 2:1-12**

*Thinking about the passage:*

- What do you think attracted such large crowds?
  - What do we know about houses (and roofs) in the time of Jesus that can help us make sense of this story's setting?
- Why does Jesus respond to the friends' faith by saying to the man 'your sins are forgiven'? (v.5)
- What are some of the things you would say this story is about?

*Thinking about our lives in the light of the passage:*

- Who did you identify most naturally with in the passage? – Jesus, the paralysed man, his friends, the teachers of the law, the man whose house had its roof dug through? What does the story say to each perspective?

*(For groups wanting to probe deeper:)*

- What is the balance in this story between a focus on what Jesus does, and who Jesus is? How far would you want to say that Mark 2:1-12 is trying to reveal Jesus' divine nature? Can anyone help the group reflect on why the teachers of the law say that only God can forgive sins? (In what ways does the Old Testament say this?)

What other questions about the passage do people in the group have? If you heard a sermon on it this past Sunday, discuss any insights or reflections.

## ***Session 2 – Prayer and Praise***

### **Mark 2:18 – 3:6**

- Read the passage noted above and share any insights or reflections.
- Were there helpful pointers in the sermon this week?
  - One of our rhythms of grace in the Community of St Cuthbert is rest. How does Mark 2:23-28 illuminate our understanding of (sabbath) rest?

*Praise:* have someone choose hymns or worship songs (to sing or to listen to) that can help you praise God as a group.

*Prayer:* one suggestion is to include in your prayer time together this week a focus on those on our church prayer list who are in need of God's healing. You can always find an up-to-date version on our prayer list at [www.stnics.org/prayer](http://www.stnics.org/prayer), scroll down to "Prayers for our Church Family", and go to the end of the document for up-to-date prayer requests.

## **Session 3 – Bible Study**

### **Mark 3:20-34**

*Thinking about the passage:*

- What does the passage say about family? – Jesus’ family and ours?
- This is a rare story where Jesus does not appear to be attempting to perform any particular ministry – the crowds and the teachers of the law come to him (and so do his family), and only then (v.23) does he respond in parables. So what do you think all these people were initially responding to?

- What is Jesus’ argument about ‘a house divided against itself’ (v.25)?

What would it apply to? – a household? and/or something more general?

*Thinking about our lives in the light of the passage:*

- How much do we think about spiritual engagement with forces opposed to God in our own lives and contexts? Can the group share any wisdom or encouragement on this?

*(For groups wanting to probe deeper:)*

- Many people have debated what Jesus means by ‘blaspheming against the Holy Spirit’ (v.29). In this passage, in this context, it seems to refer to attributing God’s work to Satan – because if someone does that then they will not be able to recognise or accept God’s help. The ‘eternal sin’ (v.29) then refers to sin with eternal consequences. Does Jesus saying these things offer us any encouragement in terms of how seriously he is taking evil and its power, at the same time as offering us protection from it?

What other questions about the passage do people in the group have? If you heard a sermon on it this past Sunday, discuss any insights or reflections.

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## ***Session 4 – Celebration and Review***

Sunday's passage was **Mark 4:1-20**, Jesus' parable of the sower.

- Have each person share something that strikes them about the passage, or a question it raises for them.

Groups may wish to use this session to review their activities or commitments to justice and service.

But it is also going to be a final meeting before the summer break for most groups. Perhaps take some time to reflect on how your group is doing with commitments to our rhythms of grace, and then prayer for and encourage one another:

1. We resolve to Pray each day
2. We set aside time for Study and learning
3. We engage with the ~~life~~ of Worship in our local church
4. We practise Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_
5. We work together for God's ~~life-giving~~ Justice
6. We engage in ~~practical~~ acts of Service
7. We enjoy God's gift of Rest in the midst of ~~busy~~ lives \_\_\_\_\_

Enjoy a restful and energising ~~Summer~~ Summer!