



GROUNDWORK

ROOTED IN TRUTH • GROWING IN CHRIST

A seven-week journey to help build a strong
foundation in following Jesus

ABOUT

Groundwork is a seven-week workshop designed to help new believers build a strong foundation in the Christian faith. Together we'll explore who Jesus is, what the gospel means, how to read the Bible, the role of prayer and the Holy Spirit, why the church matters, and how to follow Jesus daily with hope.

Each session combines clear teaching with open discussion - creating a safe place to learn, grow, and discover what it means to walk with Christ. You'll also have plenty of space to bring your own questions.

Our desire is that this course helps you put down strong roots in your faith - and we'll be walking this journey together.

SESSIONS

1: Who is Jesus?

2: The Gospel / Good News

3: The Bible - origins and reliability

4: Prayer, Worship and the Holy Spirit

5: The Church and Community

6: Following Jesus Daily

7: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Josephus – Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18.63–64

(William Whiston translation, 1737)

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ.”

2. Tacitus – Annals, Book 15, Chapter 44

(Alfred John Church & William Jackson Brodribb translation, 1876)

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians (or Chrestians) by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate; and the pernicious superstition, thus checked for a time, again broke out – not only in Judaea, the source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things horrible or shameful from every part of the world find a centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who were guilty; then, upon their information, a vast multitude was convicted – not so much on account of the crime of firing the city, as for hatred against mankind.”

Tacitus continues with vivid details of the persecution:

“Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths: they were covered with wild beast skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were nailed to crosses; or condemned to the flames and burned, to serve by night as illumination, when daylight had failed. Nero provided his gardens for the spectacle, and gave them over to the amusement of the people, mingling with the crowd in the garb of a charioteer, or mounted in his chariot.”

Bible References

John 1 : 1-14 (NLT)

¹In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He existed in the beginning with God.

³God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

⁴The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

⁶God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.

¹¹He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. ¹²But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

¹³They are reborn – not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

¹⁴So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

Matthew 16: 13-16 (NLT)

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴“Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

¹⁵Then he asked them, “**But who do you say I am?**”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.**”

Common Questions About Jesus

About His Identity

“Wasn’t Jesus just a good teacher?”

He was a good teacher, but He also claimed to forgive sins and be one with God (**John 10:30**). That’s more than a moral teacher.

“Did Jesus ever claim to be God?”

Yes. He accepted worship, used God’s own name “I AM” (**John 8:58**), and the religious leaders wanted Him executed for blasphemy.

“Isn’t Jesus just one prophet among many?”

Prophets point to God; Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh (**John 14:9**).

“Wasn’t His divinity invented later?”

No. The earliest Christian writings (e.g., **Philippians 2:6–11**) describe Him as divine within decades of His life.

About His Life

“Did Jesus really exist?”

Yes. Roman and Jewish historians (Tacitus, Josephus) mention Him, in addition to the New Testament.

“Was Jesus copied from other myths?”

No. Claims of parallels (e.g., dying/rising gods) don’t match the historical, Jewish setting of Jesus’ life and death.

“Why born in humble circumstances?”

To show God’s kingdom is not about power and status, but humility and love (**Philippians 2:5–8**).

About His Death & Resurrection

“Did Jesus just faint on the cross?”

Roman executioners were experts. The spear in His side (**John 19:34**) confirmed death.

“Resurrection a hoax?”

The disciples were willing to die for their claim. Hoaxes don’t produce such lasting faith.

“Why did God require the cross?”

Sin is serious, but God’s love is greater. Jesus bore our penalty so we could be forgiven (**Romans 5:8**).

“Resurrection a later legend?”

No. Paul’s letters (written within 20 years) already affirm eyewitnesses and the risen Christ.

About His Teachings

“Why preach love and judgment?”

True love warns of danger. Jesus spoke of judgment because He wants people to find life in Him (**John 3:16–17**).

“Why didn’t Jesus write anything?”

He taught orally in a culture of memory and discipleship. His followers faithfully recorded His words.

“Wasn’t He only sent to Israel?”

He began with Israel, but always intended to reach the nations (**Matthew 28:19; John 3:16**).

“Isn’t ‘I am the way’ exclusive?”

It’s exclusive in that He’s the only way, but inclusive in that all are invited.

About His Relevance Today

“Why hasn’t He come back yet?”

God is patient, giving people time to repent (**2 Peter 3:9**).

“How can He be both God and man?”

It’s a mystery, but Scripture shows He is fully both (**John 1:14; Colossians 2:9**).

“Why are Christians hypocritical?”

Christians aren’t perfect; they’re forgiven. Hypocrisy doesn’t disprove Christ, it shows our need for Him.

“Can Jesus understand me today?”

Yes. He lived as a human, facing temptation and suffering, yet without sin (**Hebrews 4:15**).

Application

The gospel isn't just information – it's transformation. Have you personally trusted Jesus' death and resurrection for your salvation?

NOTES

Questions:

- What does this “good news” mean for you?
- How does it change how you see your life?

Misunderstandings About the Gospel

Sometimes people get the wrong idea about Christianity. Here are a few common misunderstandings:

- “The gospel is about being a good person.”
No, it's about what Christ has done, not our effort.
- “God will accept me if my good outweighs my bad.”
No, the standard is perfection. Only Jesus meets it.
- “Faith in Jesus means life will be easy.”
No, but He promises to be with us through trials.
- “The resurrection is just a nice story.”
No, it's a historical event, seen by eyewitnesses.
- “The gospel is only about heaven when I die.”
No, it's about new life starting now.

Some common objections to the Gospel

- “I'm a good person. I don't need saving.”
Counter: By human standards you may be good – but God's standard is His own holiness. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Romans 3:23**). Even small sins create separation, just as a single crack weakens a foundation.
- “A loving God wouldn't judge people.”
Counter: Love and justice go together. If God ignored evil, He wouldn't be loving. But His love is shown in that He took judgment on Himself in Christ (**Romans 5:8**).
- “I'll try harder and fix myself.”
Counter: Sin isn't just bad habits – it's a condition of the heart. No amount of effort removes guilt. That's why salvation is by grace, not works (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).
- “Jesus is just one of many ways to God.”
Counter: Jesus claimed exclusivity: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (**John 14:6**). Other paths may offer wisdom, but only Jesus deals with sin through the cross.

Understanding the truth helps us see just how good the good news really is.

The Big Picture:

The bad news is that sin separates us from God, and we can't fix it ourselves.

The good news is that Jesus died and rose again to forgive, restore, and give new life.

The gospel isn't about what YOU can do – it's about what JESUS has already done. The only question left is: Will you receive it?

- **“The resurrection is impossible – dead people don’t rise.”**

Counter: Exactly – and that’s why it’s a miracle. The early disciples staked their lives on eyewitness testimony (**1 Corinthians 15:5-8**). The empty tomb, the transformation of fearful disciples, and the explosive growth of the church all point to the resurrection as the best explanation.

- **“Christians are hypocrites, so the gospel must not be true.”**

Counter: Christians often fail, but hypocrisy doesn’t disprove Christ – it proves our need for Him. The message is not “Christians are perfect,” but “Christ saves sinners.”

- **“Faith is just wishful thinking.”**

Counter: Biblical faith is not blind optimism; it’s trust based on evidence – the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, supported by history, eyewitnesses, and changed lives across centuries.

Bible References

Romans 3: 23-26 (NLT)

²³For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. ²⁴Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15: 3-9 (NLT)

³I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. ⁶After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. ⁹For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God’s church.

Romans 6:20-23 (NLT)

²⁰When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²²But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5: 8 (NLT)

⁸But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

John 14:6 (NLT)

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

How do we know what God is like?

How do we know what Jesus taught?

The answer is the Bible.

Main Teaching

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” **Psalm 119:105** says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The Bible is not just a book – it is God’s Word, given to reveal who He is and how we should live.

Historical Evidence

The Bible is also reliable. Over 5,800 Greek New Testament manuscripts survive – far more than any other ancient text. The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947, showed that Old Testament writings were copied with incredible accuracy over centuries. Compared to other ancient works, the Bible stands out as remarkably well-preserved.

Application

If this truly is God’s Word, then it should shape our lives. Reading Scripture isn’t about duty, but relationship – hearing God speak to us.

Discussion

- **How can we make Bible reading a regular part of daily life?**

Bible References

Psalm 19: 7-8 (NIV)

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

When and How the Books of the Bible Were Put Together

The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible)

Written: Roughly 1400 BC – 400 BC (from Moses to the later prophets).

Language: Mostly Hebrew, with some Aramaic.

Collected: These books (Law, Prophets, Writings) were recognized by the Jewish people as Scripture well before the time of Jesus. By the 1st century AD, the Hebrew Scriptures were already firmly established.

Septuagint: Around 250–150 BC, Jewish scholars in Alexandria translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This version, called the Septuagint, was widely used in Jesus’ time.

Some Common Misconceptions About the Bible

1. “The Bible was made up centuries later by church leaders.”

Counter: The Old Testament was already recognized by the Jewish people before Jesus. The New Testament writings were circulating and used in churches by the end of the 1st century. Councils didn't invent the canon; they simply confirmed what believers already recognized as authoritative.

2. “The Bible has been changed so much over time that we can't know what it originally said.”

Counter: The New Testament is the best-preserved document of antiquity – with over 5,800 Greek manuscripts, some within decades of the originals. The Dead Sea Scrolls show the Old Testament was copied with remarkable accuracy. The evidence shows stability, not corruption.

3. “The Bible is full of contradictions.”

Counter: Most “contradictions” are differences in perspective or detail (especially in the Gospels). Like multiple eyewitnesses describing the same event, the accounts emphasize different aspects but agree on the essentials. This actually strengthens credibility, because word-for-word copies would suggest collusion.

4. “The Bible copied its stories from myths.”

Counter: While other ancient cultures had creation or flood stories, the biblical accounts are distinct in theology and tone – one God, moral purpose, and covenant relationship. Rather than copying, the Bible often corrects or redefines pagan myths.

5. “The Bible is just a book of rules to control people.”

Counter: While it contains commands, at its heart the Bible is a story of God's love, mercy, and redemption. The rules are not about control but about shaping life that reflects God's goodness and leads to freedom.

6. “The Bible is outdated and irrelevant.”

Counter: Human technology has changed, but human nature hasn't. Questions of identity, purpose, morality, and meaning are as real today as in the ancient world. Scripture speaks to the deepest human needs, which don't go out of date.

7. “You can make the Bible say whatever you want.”

Counter: Any text can be misused if taken out of context. But when read carefully – in context, with its historical background – the Bible has a consistent message: God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Big Picture:

The Bible has stood up to centuries of scrutiny. Rather than collapsing under criticism, its historical reliability, unity, and transforming power continue to be affirmed.

This week we're looking at three areas that are absolutely central to the Christian life: **prayer, worship, and the Holy Spirit.**

Prayer is how we talk with God.

Worship is how we respond to God.

And the **Holy Spirit** is how we live with God's power and presence every day.

These aren't just churchy ideas - they're the heartbeat of a Christian's daily walk."

1. Prayer - Talking with God

- **Read Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer).**

Jesus didn't just tell us to pray - He showed us how. Notice it begins with 'Our Father'. Prayer is rooted in relationship. God isn't a distant ruler or an angry boss; He's a loving Father who invites us to come close.

Prayer includes:

- **Praise** ('Hallowed be your name')
- reminding ourselves who God is.
- **Surrender** ('Your kingdom come, your will be done')
- laying down our plans before Him.
- **Dependence** ('Give us today our daily bread')
- trusting Him for what we need.
- **Forgiveness** ('Forgive us our debts')
- receiving grace and extending it to others.
- **Protection** ('Deliver us from the evil one')
- leaning on Him in life's battles.

Prayer is not about fancy words or formulas. It's about honesty. It's as simple as talking to a close friend - but that friend also happens to be the Creator of the universe!

Application:

Start small and consistent. Short prayers in the morning, prayers while walking, prayers of thanks at night. The point is connection, not performance."

2. Worship - Responding to God

- **Read Romans 12:1.**

"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship."

Worship is not just about singing songs on Sunday. Worship is a lifestyle. It's the way we live in response to who God is and what He has done.

Worship through music: Singing helps us declare truth with our hearts and minds aligned. That's why the early church sang hymns to Christ.

Worship through daily life: Every act of obedience, every moment of generosity, every choice to honour God with our time and body is worship.

Worship through trials: Sometimes worship is declaring God's goodness even when life is hard. Paul and Silas sang hymns in prison (**Acts 16:25**).

Application:

Ask yourself, "What story does my life tell?" Worship is not just a Sunday activity, but a daily offering to God.

3. The Holy Spirit – Living with God’s Power

- **Read John 14:16-17, 26-27.**

Jesus promised the Spirit as our **Helper, Comforter, and Teacher**.

The Christian life is impossible without the Holy Spirit. He is the presence of God with us and in us.

The Spirit’s role includes:

- **Convicting us of sin (John 16:8)**
– showing us where we need God’s grace.
- **Empowering us for service (Acts 1:8)**
– giving boldness to witness and gifts to build up the church.
- **Guiding us into truth (John 16:13)**
– leading our decisions and reminding us of Jesus’ words.
- **Transforming us (Galatians 5:22-23)**
– producing fruit like love, joy, peace, patience.

Living by the Spirit means daily surrender: ‘Come, Holy Spirit. Lead me today.’

Application:

Be intentional – pause and invite the Spirit before decisions, in conversations, and when facing challenges.

How They Tie Together

Now let’s connect the dots.

- **Prayer** is how we talk with God.
- **Worship** is how we respond to God.
- **The Holy Spirit** is how we walk with God’s presence and power.

They are not separate boxes – they flow into one another.

- When we **pray**, the Spirit helps us (**Romans 8:26**).
- When we **worship**, the Spirit stirs our hearts (**Ephesians 5:18-19**).
- And when **we walk by the Spirit**, our whole lives become prayerful and worshipful.

The Christian life is not about ticking off disciplines – it’s about living in relationship with God every moment. Prayer, worship, and the Spirit keep that relationship alive, vibrant, and real.”

Conclusion

Christianity isn’t a religion of rituals – it’s a relationship with the living God.

- **Through prayer we speak with Him,**
- **Through worship we respond to Him,**
- **Through the Spirit we live in Him.**

When you wake up, you don’t just face the day alone. You face it with God the Father listening to your prayers, God the Son giving you a reason to worship, and God the Spirit empowering you to live.

Discussion

- **Do you see prayer as a duty or as a privilege?**
- **Have you experienced the Spirit’s guidance in your life?**
- **How do you imagine God hears your prayers?**
- **What might worship look like in everyday life?**

Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

⁹This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”

Romans 12: 1-2 (NLT)

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. **This is truly the way to worship him.**² Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Acts 16: 25-26 (NLT)

²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶ Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

John 14: 15-17 & 26-27 (NLT)

¹⁵ “If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ **He is the Holy Spirit**, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him.

²⁶ But when the Father sends **the Advocate** as my representative – **that is, the Holy Spirit** – he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. ²⁷ I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give.

John 16: 5-9 (NLT)

⁵ “But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the **Advocate** won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹ The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me.

Acts 1: 8 (NLT)

⁸ But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you**. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

John 16: 13 (NLT)

¹³ When the **Spirit of truth** comes, he will guide you into all truth.

Galatians 5: 22-23 (NLT)

²² But the **Holy Spirit** produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Analogies

- **Body analogy:** Just like a body needs every part, the church needs every believer.
- **Family analogy:** God adopts us into His family; no one is meant to be an only child in the kingdom.
- **Fire analogy:** A coal taken out of the fire cools quickly; together, the coals burn bright.

Practical Applications

- Commit:** Don't just attend occasionally – devote yourself to learning, worship, and fellowship (**Acts 2:42**).
- Serve:** Discover your gifts and use them to bless others. No role is too small.
- Love:** Practice forgiveness, encouragement, and generosity.
- Witness:** Remember that how we treat each other is part of how the world sees Jesus.
- Sacraments:** Participate in baptism and communion as signs of belonging and remembrance.

Conclusion

The church is God's design to help us grow strong in faith. It's not a perfect community, but it's a forgiven one, learning to love God and each other.

Just as Jesus didn't call us to follow Him alone, He placed us in His body, His family. Together we learn, serve, worship, and shine His light to the world.

Discussion

- What excites you about belonging to a church family?**
- What challenges or fears do you feel about community?**
- How can we practically love and support one another this week?"**
- What's one small step you can take this week to engage more deeply in community – prayer, service, encouragement, or fellowship?**

Bible References

Acts 2: 42-47 (NLT)

⁴²All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

⁴³A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – ⁴⁷all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

¹²The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptised into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

NOTES

¹⁴ Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. ¹⁵ If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

¹⁸ But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ¹⁹ How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰ Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. ²¹ The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.”

²² In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. ²³ And the parts we regard as less honourable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, ²⁴ while the more honourable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honour and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. ²⁵ This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honoured, all the parts are glad.

²⁷ All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.

John 13: 34-35

³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: **Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.** ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”



GROUNDWORK

Session 6: Following Jesus Daily (Discipleship)

NOTES

When someone becomes a Christian, it's not the end of a journey, but the beginning. Following Jesus calls us into a lifelong walk – one filled with both trials and hope. This week, we'll see how Scripture guides us through challenges and anchors us in a lasting hope.

Discipleship is like a modern apprenticeship. An apprentice doesn't just sit in a classroom; they learn by watching, practicing, and imitating a master in real life.

In the same way, to be a disciple of Jesus means:

- **Being with Him** – spending time in His presence, learning His ways.
- **Becoming like Him** – letting His character and values shape who we are.
- **Doing what He does** – practicing His way of life: loving, serving, praying, forgiving, and announcing God's kingdom.

Just as an apprentice gradually grows in skill through hands-on experience and close mentoring, discipleship is a lifelong process of transformation as we walk with Jesus, learn from Him, and join Him in His work.

Bible Teaching

Discipleship is daily surrender

Read Luke 9:23-24:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

It's not about a one-time decision but a repeated, daily choice to let go and follow.

Run with perseverance

Read Hebrews 12:1-3:

We are called to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us,” keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Even amid pain or weariness, we press on by remembering His example.

Historical Evidence

The early church endured intense persecution – yet grew. Even under emperors like Nero, Christians kept gathering.

Polycarp, a disciple of John, was martyred around AD 155 for refusing to renounce Christ. His bravery reflects the steadfast hope early believers held, even in the face of death.

Common Misunderstandings

- **“Faith means an easy life.”**
No. Jesus said we'd face trials, but He promised His presence and victory (**John 16:33**).
- **“Spirituality is just about avoiding sin.”**
It's deeper – it's about transformation by the Spirit into Christlikeness.

Analogies

Runner analogy: Think of Christlike living like a marathon – a steady, focused running, not a sprint.

Garden analogy: Spiritual growth is like gardening. You dig up sinners, plant in grace, water with prayer, and wait for transformation.

Life Application

Daily surrender:

Begin each day with, “Jesus, I choose today to follow you.”

Steady habits:

Establish rhythms – morning prayer, Scripture reading, Sabbath rest – to sustain your walk.

Resilience:

When trials come, lean into Christian community rather than withdraw.

Remember eternal hope:

Keep the goal of eternity in mind – it reorients daily struggles.

Reflection prompt:

What one small but faithful habit could help you keep your eyes on Jesus this week?

Quotes:

John Mark Comer:

“You can’t follow Jesus alone. Not ‘shouldn’t’; can’t... He called people to apprentice under him in community.”

This reminds us that following Jesus is not meant to be done in isolation – it’s an apprenticeship within community.

“Jesus did miracles not by flexing his God muscles like Thor but by living in reliance on the Spirit’s power.”

Our own spiritual life isn’t built on effort alone, but on reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Dallas Willard:

“The aim of spiritual formation is not behaviour modification but the transformation of all those aspects of you and me where behaviour comes from...”

Discipleship isn’t just about doing good things – it’s about being changed from the inside out.

Conclusion

Sin isn’t defeated by your strength, but by surrendering to Christ daily.

Hope isn’t wishful thinking, but anchored in the resurrected Jesus who empowers us.

Transformation isn’t a checklist, it’s a pours-from-the-inside process made possible by the Spirit and sustained by community.

Following Jesus isn’t a one-time choice, but a journey with daily dependence, lasting community, and an eternal hope that never fades.

Up to now we've talked about prayer, worship, the Holy Spirit, the church, and following Jesus daily. Tonight we're going to look at something very practical and encouraging: **the gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

The gifts are not for spiritual elites or 'super Christians'. They are God's way of equipping **ordinary believers** to build up the church and serve the world in Jesus' name.

Main Teaching

1. The Holy Spirit Gives Gifts to Every Believer

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Key point:

- Every Christian receives gifts
- No one is left out

Gifts are given for the good of others, not self-promotion

2. What Are the Gifts?

The main biblical lists can be found in:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation

Romans 12:6-8

Serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, mercy

Ephesians 4:11-12

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (leadership gifts)

Key point:

Gifts are diverse - some more visible, some very practical

All are equally valuable

3. Are the Gifts Lists Complete?

Whilst the Bible gives us several lists of spiritual gifts, it's important to understand that these lists are **descriptive, not exhaustive.**

In other words, Scripture never says, "*These are the only gifts the Holy Spirit gives.*"

Instead, the lists show us the kind of ways the Spirit works through people.

The Holy Spirit is creative and personal. He delights in using people's personalities, experiences, skills, and passions for God's purposes.

So, if God uses you to do something that:

- Brings glory to Him
- Blesses other people
- Aligns with the teaching and character of Scripture

... then it may rightly be understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit - even if it doesn't appear by name in a biblical list.

This helps us see that gifts are not limited to certain "spiritual" activities. Hospitality, creativity, administration, encouragement, craftsmanship, listening well, or bringing peace into difficult situations can all be Spirit-empowered ways God works through His people.

Life Application

Encourage participants to:

- **Serve first** – gifts often emerge through action
- **Pay attention** – what brings life? What helps others?
- **Ask God** – “Holy Spirit, how have you gifted me?”
- **Use gifts in love** – small, faithful steps matter

Practical reflection:

Where do you already see God using you to bless others?

Bible References

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.



OUR HOUSE CHURCH

Looking Ahead

If you'd like to go deeper in understanding what it means to be a disciple – or apprentice – of Jesus, we'd love you to join our follow-on course:

“Brick by Brick”

Based on John Mark Comer's book, 'Practicing the Way'

In this course you'll discover and begin to practice healthy spiritual habits that help you follow Jesus in everyday life – step by step, brick by brick.

For information about this course or anything else regarding Our House Church, please feel free to contact us: admin@ourhouseyateley.co.uk

or visit our website:

www.ourhouseyateley.co.uk



Developed by House Church Yateley, **Groundwork** has been designed to support new Christians as they take their first steps in following Jesus.



**OUR HOUSE
CHURCH**

www.ourhouseyateley.co.uk
admin@ourhouseyateley.co.uk

Groundwork: Rooted in Truth • Growing in Christ
Developed by House Church Yateley, © 2025.
Permission granted to use for personal and church ministry.

Our House Church Yateley is a charity registered in England and Wales. Registered Charity Number: 1196812