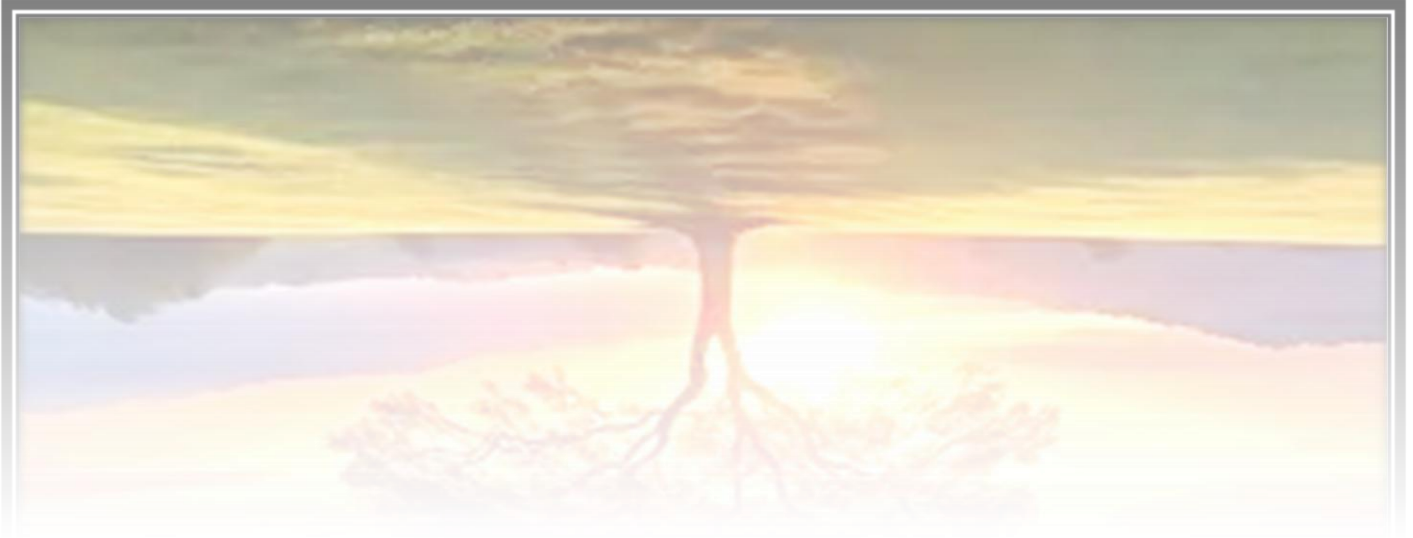


Words for the Journey

A Collection of Scripture and Inspirational Readings for Life's Most Meaningful Moments



Bible Readings for Weddings, Funerals and Dedications

A selection of readings for use in Christian services

This booklet provides Scripture readings suitable for weddings, funerals and dedications. The celebrant may choose the translation and length of each reading according to the character of the service and the wishes of the family or couple.

Wedding Readings

Love and Commitment

- **Genesis 2:18–24** — The creation of companionship and the joining of two lives.
- **Ruth 1:16–17** — A beautiful declaration of loyalty, faithfulness and lasting commitment.
- **Song of Solomon 2:10–13** — An affectionate celebration of love and new beginnings.
- **Song of Solomon 8:6–7** — Love described as powerful, enduring and beyond price.
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9–12** — The strength and support found in companionship.

Christian Love

- **1 Corinthians 13:1–13** — The qualities of patient, kind and enduring love.
- **Colossians 3:12–17** — A pattern of compassion, forgiveness, peace and gratitude.
- **1 John 4:7–12** — Love as a reflection of God's character and presence.
- **Matthew 5:1–12** — The blessings of humility, mercy, peacemaking and faithfulness.
- **John 15:9–12** — Jesus' teaching to remain in love and to love one another.

Marriage and Partnership

- **Matthew 19:4–6** — The union of two people in marriage and the importance of faithfulness.
- **Mark 10:6–9** — A teaching on commitment, unity and the joining of two lives.
- **Ephesians 4:1–3** — An encouragement to live with humility, patience and gentleness.
- **Ephesians 5:21–33** — Mutual care, self-giving love and devotion within marriage.
- **Philippians 2:1–5** — An invitation to put aside selfish ambition and consider one another.

Blessing and Gratitude

- **Numbers 6:24-26** - "The Lord bless you and keep you..." A beautiful blessing for the couple's future together
- **Psalms 100** - A joyful reading about gratitude, thanksgiving and celebrating God's goodness.
- **Psalms 128:1-4** - A blessing on family life, peace and shared happiness.
- **James 1:17** - Every good and perfect gift comes from God. Often used to recognise the gift of relationship and partnership.

Faithfulness and Endurance

- **Lamentations 3:22-26** - A reminder of God's steadfast love, faithfulness and hope through every season.
- **Romans 12:9-18** - Practical guidance on sincere love, devotion, patience and living in harmony.
- **Hebrews 10:23-25** - Encourages faithfulness, mutual support and encouraging one another.
- **2 Timothy 1:7** - A short but powerful reading about love, strength and courage.

Joy and Celebration

- **Psalms 118:24** - "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
- **Isaiah 61:10-11** - A joyful celebration of God's blessing, often associated with weddings.
- **John 2:1-11** - The Wedding at Cana. Jesus attends a wedding feast, celebrating abundance and joy.
- **Philippians 4:4-9** - A reading focused on joy, peace, thankfulness and trust.

Friendship and Partnership

- **Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 6:14-17** (*for traditions that include the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books*) - A faithful friend described as a priceless treasure.
- **Romans 15:5-7** - Live in harmony, accept one another, and glorify God together.
- **1 Peter 3:8-9** - Calls for unity, compassion, humility and kindness.
- **Galatians 5:22-23** - The Fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and faithfulness.

New Beginnings and Shared Journey

- **Isaiah 43:18-19** - "See, I am doing a new thing." Ideal for vow renewals and second marriages.
- **Jeremiah 29:11-13** - A hopeful reading about God's plans and future.
- **Proverbs 3:3-6** - Trust, faithfulness and guidance for life's journey together.
- **Joshua 24:15** - "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Vow Renewal Specific Readings

These work particularly well when celebrating a marriage that has already stood the test of time:

- **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** - A season for everything.
- **Psalms 136:1-9, 23-26** - Repeated refrain of enduring love.
- **Lamentations 3:22-23** - Faithfulness renewed every morning.
- **Philippians 1:3-6** - Gratitude for a shared journey.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** - Rejoice, pray and give thanks.
- **Song of Solomon 8:6-7** - Especially meaningful when read after many years together.

Particularly good combinations

Traditional Christian Wedding

1. Genesis 2:18-24
2. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Vow Renewal

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
2. Philippians 1:3-6

Celebration of Lasting Love

1. Song of Solomon 8:6-7
2. Romans 12:9-18

Commitment Ceremony

1. Ruth 1:16-17
2. Galatians 5:22-23

Funeral and Memorial Readings

Comfort and Hope

- **Psalms 23** — God's presence and guidance through every valley.
- **Psalms 27:1, 4–9, 13–14** — Courage, trust and hope in times of uncertainty.
- **Psalms 46** — God as refuge and strength in times of trouble.
- **Psalms 121** — Help, protection and steadfast care.
- **Psalms 130** — Waiting, forgiveness and hope in God's mercy.
- **Isaiah 41:10** — Reassurance that God is present and gives strength.
- **Isaiah 43:1–3** — A promise of God's presence through deep waters and hardship.

God's Presence in Grief

- **Matthew 5:1–10** — The blessing of those who mourn and those who seek peace.
- **Matthew 11:28–30** — Christ's invitation to those who are weary and burdened.
- **John 11:17–27** — Jesus' conversation with Martha and the hope of resurrection.
- **John 11:32–36** — Jesus shares in human grief at the death of Lazarus.
- **John 14:1–6, 18–19, 25–27** — Words of comfort, peace and hope.
- **Romans 8:31–39** — Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Resurrection and Eternal Hope

- **Isaiah 25:6–9** — The promise that death will ultimately be overcome.
- **1 Corinthians 15:12–26, 35–44, 51–57** — The resurrection and the Christian hope of new life.
- **2 Corinthians 4:16–18** — Encouragement to look beyond present troubles to eternal hope.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18** — Comfort for those who grieve and hope in Christ's return.
- **Revelation 21:1–5** — A vision of God wiping away every tear and making all things new.

Remembering a Life

- **Psalms 90:1–12** — Reflection on the brevity of life and the wisdom of living well.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:1–8** — The changing seasons and experiences of human life.
- **Micah 6:8** — A concise call to justice, mercy and humble faithfulness.
- **Matthew 25:31–40** — The importance of compassion and practical service to others.
- **2 Timothy 4:6–8** — A reflection on perseverance, faithfulness and completing life's journey.

Peace and Rest

- **Psalms 4:8** - "I will lie down and sleep in peace..." A short reading about security and rest in God's care.

- **Psalms 62:1-2, 5-8** - Finding rest, hope and strength in God alone.
- **Isaiah 26:3-4** - Perfect peace for those whose trust remains in God.
- **John 14:27** - Jesus' gift of peace that endures beyond life's troubles.
- **Philippians 4:6-7** - Peace that guards hearts and minds through prayer and trust.

God's Faithfulness

- **Deuteronomy 31:6** - Be strong and courageous, for God never leaves or forsakes His people.
- **Psalms 36:5-9** - A celebration of God's steadfast love and faithfulness.
- **Lamentations 3:22-26** - The Lord's mercies are new every morning.
- **Hebrews 13:8** - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- **2 Timothy 2:11-13** - A powerful affirmation of God's enduring faithfulness.

Strength in Difficult Times

- **Joshua 1:9** - "Be strong and courageous." A reading of courage and divine presence.
- **Psalms 34:17-18** - The Lord is close to the broken-hearted.
- **Isaiah 40:28-31** - Renewed strength and hope for those who wait upon the Lord.
- **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** - God as the source of all comfort.
- **1 Peter 5:7** - Cast all your worries upon Him because He cares for you.

The Journey of Life

- **Psalms 139:1-18** - God's intimate knowledge and care throughout our lives.
- **Proverbs 3:1-6** - Trusting God through life's journey.
- **Ecclesiastes 7:1-4** - Reflection on life's meaning and legacy.
- **James 4:13-15** - A reminder of life's fragility and dependence on God.
- **Hebrews 12:1-2** - Running life's race with perseverance.

Legacy and Character

- **Proverbs 31:10-31** - Celebrates a life of faithfulness, kindness and strength.
- **Matthew 5:13-16** - Being a light to others through one's life and actions.
- **Galatians 5:22-23** - The fruits of the Spirit as a measure of a life well lived.
- **Colossians 3:12-17** - Compassion, kindness, humility and love.
- **1 Timothy 6:11-12** - Pursuing righteousness, faith, love and perseverance

Heaven and the Promise of Eternity

- **John 14:1-3** - Christ prepares a place for His people.
- **Philippians 3:20-21** - Our true citizenship is in heaven.
- **2 Corinthians 5:1-8** - The hope of an eternal home with God.
- **1 Peter 1:3-9** - A living hope through Christ.
- **Revelation 7:9-17** - A beautiful vision of comfort, joy and worship in God's presence.

Thanksgiving for a Life

- **Psalms 103:1-5, 13-18** - Remembering God's goodness and mercy.
- **Psalms 116:12-17** - A song of gratitude and thanksgiving.
- **Ephesians 1:15-18** - Giving thanks for the faith and influence of another.
- **Philippians 1:3-6** - "I thank my God every time I remember you."
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** - Rejoicing, praying and giving thanks in all circumstances.

For Parents, Grandparents and Family-Focused Services

- **Isaiah 49:15-16** - God's care compared to a loving parent.
- **Psalms 127:1-5** - The blessing of family and generations.
- **Proverbs 17:6** - "Children's children are a crown to the aged."
- **3 John 1:4** - The joy found in seeing future generations walk faithfully.

Short Readings Suitable for Modern Memorials

- **Micah 6:8** - Justice, kindness and humility.
- **Romans 14:7-9** - Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- **John 16:22** - No one can take away the joy shared with loved ones.
- **1 John 3:1-2** - The promise of being God's children.
- **Revelation 22:1-5** - The final vision of light, healing and eternal life.

Dedication Readings

Child Dedications

- **1 Samuel 1:9–28** — Hannah's prayer and her dedication of Samuel to God.
- **Psalms 8** — Wonder at God's creation and care for human life.
- **Psalms 127:3–5** — Children described as a gift and blessing.
- **Psalms 139:1–18** — God's intimate knowledge and care for every person.
- **Mark 10:13–16** — Jesus welcomes and blesses children.
- **Luke 2:22–35** — The presentation of Jesus in the temple.
- **Ephesians 3:14–21** — A prayer for strength, love and spiritual growth.

Family Promises and Guidance

- **Deuteronomy 6:4–9** — The calling to teach faith and love within the home.
- **Joshua 24:14–15** — A declaration of commitment to serve God as a household.
- **Proverbs 3:1–8** — Encouragement to trust God and walk in wisdom.
- **Proverbs 22:6** — The responsibility to guide children in the way they should go.
- **Colossians 3:12–17, 20–21** — A pattern of kindness, patience, obedience and encouragement within family life.
- **2 Timothy 1:3–7** — The influence of sincere faith passed through generations.

Dedication of a Home or Ministry

- **Psalms 127:1** — The importance of placing every work and household in God's care.
- **1 Kings 8:22–30** — Solomon's prayer of dedication and worship.
- **Nehemiah 8:1–12** — The gathering of a community around God's word.
- **Romans 12:1–2** — An invitation to offer one's life in worship and service.
- **1 Corinthians 3:9–11** — Building faithfully on a firm foundation.
- **1 Peter 2:4–10** — A community called to worship, service and witness.

Blessing and Protection

- **Numbers 6:24-26** - The Lord's blessing of protection, peace and favour.
- **Deuteronomy 31:6-8** - God's constant presence and guidance through life's journey.
- **Psalms 91:1-16** - A powerful reading of God's shelter, protection and care.
- **Psalms 121** - The Lord watches over and keeps His people.
- **Isaiah 54:13** - A promise of peace and guidance for children.

Growth and Purpose

- **Jeremiah 29:11-13** - God's plans filled with hope and a future.
- **Isaiah 43:1-4** - God's loving care and calling upon each person's life.
- **Luke 2:40, 52** - Jesus growing in wisdom, stature and favour.
- **Ephesians 2:10** - Created for good works and a meaningful purpose.
- **Philippians 1:3-6** - Confidence in God's work continuing throughout life.

Faith and Trust

- **Psalms 37:3-7** - Trusting in the Lord and finding direction.
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trusting God in all circumstances.
- **Isaiah 40:28-31** - Renewed strength and hope for the future.
- **Matthew 6:25-34** - God's care for every need.
- **Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-10** - Living by faith and trusting God's promises.

Family and Generations

- **Genesis 17:1-7** - God's covenant extending through generations.
- **Deuteronomy 7:9** - God's faithfulness to generations who love Him.
- **Psalms 78:1-7** - Sharing faith and wisdom with future generations.
- **Joel 1:3** - The importance of telling generations God's story.
- **Acts 16:31-34** - Faith influencing an entire household.

Community and Belonging

- **Romans 12:9-18** - Living with love, kindness and unity.
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** - Every person valued within the community.
- **Galatians 6:2, 9-10** - Supporting and encouraging one another.
- **Ephesians 4:1-6** - Unity, humility and peace.
- **Hebrews 10:23-25** - Encouraging one another within a faith community.

Prayer and Blessing

- **1 Chronicles 29:10-13, 18-19** - David's prayer for future generations.
- **Ephesians 1:15-19** - A prayer for wisdom and spiritual understanding.
- **Philippians 4:4-9** - Peace, joy and thanksgiving.
- **Colossians 1:9-12** - A prayer for growth, wisdom and strength.
- **3 John 1:2-4** - A blessing for well-being and faithful living.

New Beginnings

- **Genesis 28:10-17** - God's presence at the start of a new chapter.
- **Isaiah 55:10-13** - Growth, flourishing and God's purpose.
- **Matthew 7:24-27** - Building life on a firm foundation.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17** - New life and new beginnings.
- **Revelation 21:5** - "Behold, I am making all things new."

Suggested Order for a Service

1. Welcome and introduction.
2. Opening prayer or hymn.
3. First Bible reading.
4. Reflection, address or homily.
5. Second Bible reading, if appropriate.
6. Prayers of thanksgiving, commitment or remembrance.
7. Closing blessing or commendation.

Choosing a Reading

When choosing a reading, consider the people being honoured, the theme of the service and the length of time available. A shorter passage may suit a dedication, while a funeral may benefit from readings that acknowledge grief, expressing comfort and hope.

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