

The Swedish Method

A HELPFUL APPROACH
TO BIBLE STUDY/READING

Why This Approach?

This approach is called 'The Swedish Method' after a Swedish small group who first used it. Historically, it is very similar to Lectio Divina, which literally translated means; 'divine reading'. It is a way of reading personally and immersively.

Here's 5 reasons why the 'Swedish Method' is helpful for us...

1. God spoke to reveal, not to hide Himself, which means the bible basically makes sense. It is not impossible to understand. Anyone with the Spirit can read and understand something of what God is saying. This approach helps us experience that truth for ourselves.
2. It puts us all on the same level, where we're all wrestling with what God's word says, rather than constantly deferring to the 'bible expert' in our Small Group or the study notes in our bible's margins.
3. It teaches the most basic but most difficult skill of reading the bible – actually observing what it says, and letting God speak for himself.
4. It's a helpful model for how to read the bible, which you can use again anytime you read it.
5. God's word changes us. God didn't just speak through human authors in the past. He speaks to us right now by the Holy Spirit every time we read and think about His words. This approach helps us experience that truth, especially with the application and sharing icons.

For Living Water LifeGroups in 2025

Each week we will produce a Going Deeper Together study guide associated with the preaching, as we have done in the past, except that it will be different. It will now contain the following:

1. The particular Bible text for the preaching and study,
2. A brief synopsis of the key ideas from the preaching.
3. The Swedish Method outline

The key ideas and synopsis are not study notes, they are the reflections of the preacher for the purpose of assisting those members who might initially find this bible study method difficult to adjust to. They are meant to be a help for those who need it – but not to short circuit the method itself, which is to teach us how to read the Bible thoughtfully, understand it, and learn from one another.

How the Swedish Method works in practice:

1. Begin by praying, asking God to speak through his word.
2. Then read the Bible passage aloud. Its generally best to nominate a reader, being careful to read slowly.
3. Instruct each person to go back over the passage on their own (allow about 10 minutes of silence) and being on the lookout for, and making a note on the following 4 things (each will have an icon):



- A lightbulb: This should be something that 'shines' from the passage- whatever impacts most, or draws attention.



- A question mark: Anything that is difficult to understand in the text, or a question the reader might like to ask the writer of the passage, or the Lord.



- Jesus: What does this passage teach me about who Jesus is, what he has done for me and what it means for me to follow him in my life.



- An arrow: A personal application for the readers life.

4. Then for each of the four icons, in turn, encourage your group members to share their notes without discussion or questions (respecting those who do not wish to share, some people may not have an answer for all points). The group listens to one another.
5. Then after everyone has shared, set aside a few minutes for further group discussion.
6. Set aside 10 minutes or more for prayer.
7. This should take about 1 hour.

Further points to consider when using the Swedish Method:

- Its helpful to be quite strict with time. Some people might struggle with the time of silence (perhaps some background music here could be helpful?), but if they know its for a set period of time, most people who struggle can cope.
- There are also a couple of other icons/questions that could be used, if the leader would like to such as:

o Heart (or Exclamation mark): what is the one central idea of the passage as a whole?

o A Speech Bubble: Here the question would be asking the reader – what would you tell someone in a sentence or two, who asked you tomorrow 'What did you learn about at Bible Study last night?'

- Like most things in life, preparation tends to produce better outcomes. We would encourage LG leaders to spend some time before hand going through the study, anticipating some of the tricky questions, doing some research if need be and thinking about how they might gently lead their group.

We will suggest further resources, such as appropriate Bible commentaries or other resources, to assist you in your general preparations.

- We are responsible for our Christian growth: As a kingdom of priests, born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are responsible for keeping in step with the Spirit and his ministry to grow us in Christlikeness.