



Gospel Partners

7 Studies in Philippians

Gympie Presbyterian Church

Welcome to Growth Group for Term 4

How to get the most out of Growth Groups

As we meet together in Growth Groups our goal is to *grow* in Christ—to *grow* in our knowledge of God, our love for one another, and our passion and ability to reach our region with the gospel.

Central to Growth Groups is God's Word because God grows his people through his Word. God is also at work through one another, as we share our lives, encourage each other, and pray for each other.

So how can you get the most out of Growth Groups?

1. Be praying for your Growth Group. Pray for other members, pray for the group times, that God would be working to grow us in Christian maturity.
2. Read the Bible passage(s) before the group meets and begin thinking about what the *main thing* God says in the passage.
3. Get into the discussion by asking questions. A key part of how we dig into God's Word together is through discussion—and asking questions is the best way to get the discussion going. That's why our study booklets are mainly questions...they're a tool to help us dig! And it's good to remember there are no silly or wrong questions—if it's something you're wondering about, someone else is probably wondering the same thing (or they'd love to work with you to find the answer).
4. Beware of study notes. Study Bibles are great resources—they have tools like maps, indexes, timelines, and diagrams that can help summarise and illustrate parts of the Bible. But sometimes in Growth Groups, Study Bible notes can prevent us from digging into God's Word. They take the discussion away from looking closely at God's Word and away from engaging with and encouraging one another. They can be a good tool—but only if handled with care!
5. Share what God's doing in your life. Things that are encouraging and you want to thank God for, things that are concerning and you need supportive prayer.

Credits

These studies have been developed with assistance from material from Bundaberg, Maroochydore, and Chatswood Presbyterian Churches.

Personal Evangelism Pipeline

As we're going to discover in Philippians, God has made it so Christians partner in bringing the light of salvation to the world. We do this as we send and support people to go to other parts of the world (like we do with the Colyers) and also as we encourage and spur each other on to speak the truth of Jesus to our friends, family, and neighbours.

But despite knowing this is true, many of us don't know where to start. So in our Growth Groups we're committed to encouraging each other in personal evangelism.

This begins with **prayer**. So begin by writing 2 (or more) names on the table below and then commit yourself to pray for 2 minutes *each day* for those 2 people—asking God for opportunities to take the 'next step' so they might hear and respond to the gospel.

Then each Growth Group we'll have a *PEP Talk*—a time to share about opportunities or setbacks in sharing the gospel. It might be a conversation or opportunity you had one with one of the people you wrote down, or a conversation with someone else or a stranger. Hearing these stories is a great encouragement for us all!

Christians have the greatest news in the world to share. Our hope and prayer is God uses this simple tool to help us better fulfil Jesus' great commission!

Next Steps	Person 1	Person 2	Other People
<p>PRAY for opportunities Because it is God who saves, we pray!</p>			
<p>BUILD relationships This is about intentionally investing in relationships. Make opportunities to spend time together, getting to know them at more than a superficial level.</p>			
<p>SHOW love How can you show Christ-like love this person? Can you share a meal? Help in a specific and practical way?</p>			
<p>DEEPEN conversation Ask about their values, spirituality, or 'worldview'. Share how your faith has changed you. Ask about their struggles. Maybe offer to pray or give Biblical reflections.</p>			
<p>EXPAND the network What other Christians does this person know? How could you introduce them to other believers?</p>			
<p>INVITE to a gospel event What event would be appropriate for your friend? Could it be a regular church service, or Easter/Christmas? Could our church run a one-off event or start an evangelistic course?</p>			
<p>SHARE the gospel Everyone needs to hear the gospel message. How can you talk clearly about God, sin, death, Jesus, faith, repentance, forgiveness, and eternal life? Could you invite your friend to read a Gospel with you?</p>			
<p>LIVE each day on mission Every day we come across people who don't know Jesus. How can we find 'natural' ways to spiritual conversation with them?</p>			

Partners For Joy

Philippians 1:1-11

To Get Started

1. Do you pray for Christian friends? What kind of things do you pray for?

Read Philippians 1:1-11

2. In verses 5 and 7, Paul talks about partnership (also translated sharing, fellowship, or partaking) in the gospel. What do you think this partnership means for Paul and the Philippians?
3. In Acts 16 we hear about the gospel first coming to Philippi. **Read Acts 16:11-15, 40.** How did the earliest Christians in Philippi partner in the gospel with Paul and those with him?
4. Throughout this passage, Paul tells the Philippians how he feels about them. What words does he use to describe this?

One of the words used throughout Philippians is *joy*. In our English Bibles, words like joy, rejoice, grace, and thanks are all translations of related words in the original language.

5. What is Paul confident of for the Philippians? Why do you think this is?
6. What does Paul pray for the Philippians in verses 9-11? How does this prayer relate to *partnership*, *gospel*, and *joy*?

Bring it Together

7. Do you feel the same way about our church family—and other Christians—as Paul? What could you do to grow in affection for those who share in God’s grace with you?
8. How could you pray for people in our church—and other Christians—like Paul?
9. **My next step:** write one thing you’ve been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian



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Partners in Suffering

Philippians 1:12-30

To Get Started

1. 'No pain, no gain.' Think about a difficulty you recently went through. What made it possible to make it through?

Read Philippians 1:12-18

2. What benefits have come through Paul's imprisonment?
3. There are two groups of people who, for different reasons, respond in similar ways to Paul's imprisonment. How does Paul feel about these groups? What does this show about Paul's priorities?
4. How are *gospel partnership* and *joy* in the gospel seen in these verses?

Read Philippians 1:19-30

5. Being imprisoned would normally bring shame on a person. But what would make Paul ashamed (verse 20)?
6. According to verses 22-24, what options lie ahead for Paul? Why are these 'win-win' situations?
7. In this light of Paul's imprisonment, what does he call believers in Philippi to do? What will the outcome be of this?
8. What is Paul's perspective on suffering as a Christian? Do you think this is something most Christians in Australia share? Why or why not?

Bringing it Together

9. Can you say *to live is Christ, to die is gain*? What is stopping you? What would it take to share this perspective?

10. Paul will later write, “in fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” How can the ‘pain’ of persecution lead to ‘gain’? How can our church be a place where we prepare for this reality?

11. **My next step:** write one thing you’ve been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian

Partners in Humility

Philippians 2:1-11

To Get Started

1. When asked the secret to success, actor Dwayne Johnson (aka The Rock) said, 'be humble, hungry and the hardest worker in the room.' Do you agree?

Read Philippians 2:1-4

2. According to verse 1, what benefits have the Christians in Philippi experienced from knowing Christ?
3. How does humble partnership amongst Christians in Philippi impact Paul? Why do you think this is?
4. What specific actions does humility look like?

Read Philippians 2:5-11

5. This passage is one of the most well-known for understanding Jesus. What does this passage teach about
 1. Jesus' true (eternal) nature?
 2. Jesus' humanity?
 3. Jesus' humility?
 4. Jesus' obedience?
6. Can you think of moments from Jesus' life, recorded in the Gospels, that illustrate what we read in verses 6-11?

7. How does having the mind of Christ answer the problem of verses 1-4?

8. Is there any way in which Christians should *not* have the mind of Christ?

Bringing it Together

9. How has this passage challenged you regarding

1. *Generosity*: How has Jesus' generosity changed your life? How can we learn to be generous like Jesus?
2. *Humility*: How has Jesus' humility impacted your life? What difference will humility make to drawing closer to God, our church, and non-believers?
3. *Identity*: What difference does knowing ourselves in relation to Jesus make as we deal with difficult relationships and live to serve others?

10. **My next step**: write one thing you've been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian

Partners for Life

Philippians 2:12-30

To Get Started

1. What's a job you enjoy doing? Why do you enjoy it?

Read Philippians 2:12-18

2. Our passage begins with *therefore*. How do the preceding paragraphs (urging believers in humble unity out of imitation of Christ) relate to obedience and 'working out salvation'?
3. How does 'work out *your* salvation' and '*God* who works in you' fit together? What can go wrong if we emphasise only one of these? Do you tend toward one or the other? How do we live knowing both are true?
4. What will make Christians 'shine like stars'? What will be the impact of this? Why do we find this hard and how can we become more shiny?
5. What gives Paul satisfaction even as he suffers in prison? How can we learn to 'be glad and rejoice' with those who are suffering?

Read Philippians 2:19-30

6. Why does Paul want to send Timothy to Philippi? What does this say about a source of Christian joy?
7. Why did the Philippian believers send Epaphroditus to Paul? Why is he sending him back? What does this say about a source of Christian joy?

8. How do we see the example of Jesus (2:6-11) being lived out by Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus? How are they an example to us?

Bringing it Together

9. Are we partners in 'working out our salvation'? How could we grow in this as a Growth Group and church?
10. Are we partners in 'holding out the word of life'? How could we grow in this as a Growth Group and church?
11. Our church has begun a new partnership with the Colyers. From what we've read today, what practical steps could we take to grow our gospel partnership with them?
12. **My next step:** write one thing you've been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian

Partners in Christ

Philippians 3:1-11

To Get Started

1. What's something you're proud of achieving? What's something you still aspire to?

Read Philippians 3:1-11

2. What negative example does Paul want the Philippians to consider?¹ What is wrong with this example?
3. What reasons did Paul have for confidence before God?
4. What does Paul now consider these things? What does he put confidence in instead?
5. What difference does the source of confidence make for the problem of 'selfishness' we read about in 2:1-4?
6. Have a go at describing the two kinds/sources of righteousness in your own words.
7. What is Paul's goal now? How is the same or different from what Christians today have as their goal?

¹ The words translated 'watch out' at the start of verse 2 might better be translated 'consider'.

Partners in the Race

Philippians 3:12-4:1

To Get Started

1. Share about a project you started but haven't finished. Why haven't you been able to finish it?

Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

2. Look back over the start of chapter 3. What is the 'all this' Paul has not yet obtained? How does this inspire Paul to press on?
3. What two things are needed to press on? How do we do this?
4. How does *pressing on* fit with not having confidence in the flesh (3:8)?
5. How does Paul describe the enemies of the cross? Do you think they're the same or different from the people mentioned at the start of chapter 3?
6. What does it mean to have citizenship in heaven? How does this help resist the teaching of the enemies of the cross?
7. How does Paul describe the believers in Philippi? What is his hope for them?

Bring it Together

8. What things stop us from *pressing on*? How can we forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead?

9. Are there people today who are like the *enemies of the cross*? How can we not be led off course by them?

10. Could you ask someone to follow your example like Paul does? If not, what needs to change?

11. **My next step:** write one thing you've been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian



Partners in God's Work

Philippians 4:2-23

To Get Started

1. What are some of the famous 'bust-ups' in history or stories? What caused the bust-up and was it ever patched up?

Read Philippians 4:2-9

2. Why does Paul plead with these two women? Why are broken relationships between Christians a problem?
3. What does Paul think it will take to repair this relationship?
4. How can *joy in the Lord* and *prayer* help in times of conflict?
5. How does setting our thoughts on the right things help in times of conflict?

Read Philippians 4:10-23

6. What 'secret' has Paul learned? How has he learnt this?
7. How have the Philippians expressed their partnership with Paul?
8. Why didn't Paul 'need' the gift? But why was it appreciated? Who gained from this partnership?

9. Look back at Philippians 1:12-18. How would the greetings from the saints (believers), especially those from Caesar’s household², be an encouragement to the Philippians?

Bring it together

10. Plenty of people struggle with contentment. In what ways does our world look for contentment? How can we learn the secret of contentment?

11. Philippians 4:13 is a well-known ‘coffee cup’ verse. How is it often applied? Is this the same as what it means in context? How can we be encouraged by this verse?

12. What do you think makes a good gospel partner?

13. How can you become a better gospel partner (within church, with other believers, with gospel workers)?

14. How can our church become a better gospel partner (with other churches, with gospel workers)?

15. **My next step:** write one thing you’ve been challenged to do in each of the following areas.

Personal spiritual life	Your church family	Those who are not (yet) Christian

² This probably doesn’t refer to biological family but rather servants and slaves.

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