

BIBLE READING HABITS OF KIWIS

13

Are you aware that even though most people in your congregation own a Bible, not many of them may actually use it?

Recent Bible Society New Zealand research shows that only 11% of Christians read their Bible every day and less than one quarter will pick it up at least once during the week. Even worse is that only 47% of Christians say that the teachings of the Bible do influence their life. If followers of Jesus are not reading his Word, what is shaping their view of God? How do they know they are hearing his voice? What does this mean for the New Zealand church – what will it look like in 20 years time?

These are the very sobering questions that need to be asked, and answered. Bible Society research has also revealed why people are not reading God's Word. We can conclude from responses that there are three main reasons:

1
I GET
DISTRACTED
BY OTHER
THINGS

Our society is certainly fast-paced with many things that occupy our time. According to a 1987 book entitled *Information Anxiety*, the daily edition of the *New York Times* contains more information than a 17th century man or woman would have encountered in a lifetime. It's no wonder that the Bible often gets thrown onto the backseat of life in favour of emails and text messages, iPods and DVDs, the internet and magazines.

2
I'M TOO
BUSY

Boston College researcher Juliet Schor said, "Technology reduces the amount of time it takes to do any one task but also leads to the expansion of tasks that people are expected to do." Life seems to get busier each day as we juggle, among other things, work, family life, church ministry, volunteer work and house maintenance. We place priorities on the things we need to do. Unfortunately, reading the Bible is not a priority for many Christians.

3
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
IT

The increasingly post-modern society that we live in has brought changes in the place of the Bible in churches. It is now commonly used like a 'pick 'n' mix' bar where verses are selected to represent a theme or particular view. As a result, many Christians have little understanding of the grand story of Scripture: the creation, fall, redemption story. So they find it difficult to put Scripture into context and answer questions like when, where and why a particular book of the Bible was written.

Bible Society New Zealand is committed to helping your church address this problem. Check out the E100 Bible Reading Challenge on the inside back cover of this magazine.

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP
TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT
TO MY PATH. - Psalm 119:105

