

English Reading Group Record Form

- Please upload the record form after every sessions (total 5 times at least)

Group Leader		
Participant Attendance Record		Absent
		Absent
		Present
		Present
		Present
		Absent
		Absent

A. Meeting Photos

B. Meeting Record

Session	
Date/Day	
Leader/ Recorder	
Reading Topic Material	The Book of Ecclesiastes (Ch. 1-5): Whether Life has meaning and How to be Fulfilled
Content or Summary (1,000 words)	During this session, the reading group continued its exploration of spirituality in literature through a discussion of Chapters 1–5 of <i>Ecclesiastes</i> . The session focused on themes of meaning, fulfillment, wealth, wisdom, work, and the limits of human life. The structure of the meeting included a reconnecting activity, reading selected passages from the text, and discussing

interpretation and context questions related to the reading.

The session began with the reconnecting activity “Desert Island Choices.” Each participant answered a series of hypothetical questions one at a time. Members shared which three possessions they would keep forever if stranded on a desert island, what single activity they would choose to do for the rest of their lives, and whether they would prefer guaranteed happiness, wisdom, wealth, or fame. After each response, participants explained their reasoning. This activity helped create conversation within the group while also introducing many of the ideas explored later in the reading, particularly questions about what people value most and what provides fulfillment.

After the opening activity, the group briefly introduced the key idea for the session: *Ecclesiastes* questions whether human effort, wisdom, pleasure, wealth, and achievement can provide lasting meaning. The Teacher repeatedly describes life as “meaningless” or “vanity,” emphasizing how temporary and repetitive life can feel. At the same time, the text also encourages people to think honestly about what matters and whether fulfillment can truly be found in temporary things.

The group then began reading selected passages from Chapters 1–5 of *Ecclesiastes*. The reading started with the Teacher’s declaration that “everything is meaningless.” The group read passages describing generations coming and going while the earth remains unchanged. The text also described the repetitive cycles of nature, such as the sun rising and setting, the wind circling endlessly, and rivers continually flowing into the sea. These passages emphasized repetition and the cyclical nature of life.

The session then moved into the Teacher’s reflections on wisdom and knowledge. The group read how the Teacher

devoted himself to understanding everything under heaven but concluded that increasing wisdom also increased grief and sorrow. The text compared wisdom and foolishness, while also noting that both the wise and the foolish eventually die and are forgotten.

The reading continued into the Teacher's pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, wealth, and achievement. The Teacher describes building houses and vineyards, planting gardens, gathering wealth, hiring singers, and obtaining everything he desired. Despite achieving success and pleasure, he concludes that it was still "like chasing the wind" and did not provide lasting fulfillment.

The group also read passages discussing work and labor. The Teacher expresses frustration that people spend their lives working hard only to leave everything behind after death. He questions what people truly gain from all their labor, anxiety, and effort. At the same time, the text also states that people should enjoy food, drink, and satisfaction in their work as gifts from God.

The group then read Chapter 3, including the well-known passage describing "a time for everything." The verses listed different seasons and experiences in life, such as birth and death, mourning and dancing, silence and speech, war and peace. The passage emphasized that life moves through different seasons and experiences that humans cannot fully control.

The session also included reading passages dealing with injustice, oppression, envy, loneliness, and companionship. The Teacher observes corruption and suffering in society and reflects on how envy motivates much human ambition and success. The group also read the section explaining that "two are better than one" because people can support and strengthen each other.

Finally, the group read Chapter 5's warnings about wealth and careless promises. The Teacher argues that people who love money are never fully satisfied and that increasing wealth often creates more anxiety. The chapter concludes by suggesting that people should appreciate simple things such as food, drink, work, and daily life.

After the reading, the group discussed the context-checking questions provided in the pamphlet. These included discussing what the Teacher meant by describing life as "a chasing after the wind," identifying examples of the "times for everything" from Chapter 3, and examining the warnings the Teacher gives about wealth.

The session ended with interpretation questions connected to the themes of the reading. Participants discussed whether human achievement still matters if everyone eventually dies and is forgotten, why people continue chasing wealth and success even if it never fully satisfies them, and whether simple everyday experiences may be more meaningful than ambition or status.

Reflecting on this session, I think it went very well, and the topic was so concise that we almost ran out of material at the end to go over. I think the motif of meaning has been so repeated in our meetings that the members can really flesh out their ideas better than before. When we first started, they might have had some ideas about life, but now they both express and question ideas. I thoroughly enjoyed bringing the book of Ecclesiastes to them, as it is one of the most unique books in the bible, where the author takes the perspective of a Skeptic. Modern day people are so skeptical in their thoughts on life, and yet they never question their own skepticism! But to question whether life has any real meaning or not, and to put those words in the Bible, that

	is something we ought to pay attention to. The wisdom of this book, I believe, speaks volumes, and we were all able to mull over what it had to offer. I'm glad that the members feel more comfortable to be able to ask questions about my personal religious belief, although I do find I have to intentionally open up the question to the room before they say anything sometimes. This is fine. I hope that next time we can talk about where humanity started, and what happens after death, as these are the two questions we so far have not touched on too intimately yet, and I don't know what secular text to pick either to best fit the theme. I'll find something.