



Glossary of Terms

Many of the terms we use in the Church have come to us from the Bible and are translations from Greek. They are often terms whose meaning has been lost, but it is important that you understand them in order to get more out of the Bible. We also have churchy type words to describe aspects of church life.

Accountability – we use it to talk about “me giving someone else freedom to ask me questions that remind me of commitments I have made and encourage me to that end.”

Angels – Created supernatural beings who serve God’s purposes in various ways.

Baptism – dip/immerse in the washing of water. The outward sign represents an action that God has done in the heart.

Bible – scroll / the books. These 66 books are really one book, which we believe to be inspired by God and is the basis of our belief. Sometimes referred to as ‘God’s Word’ or the ‘Scriptures’

Celebration Service – is a phrase we use in Ruach to describe our ‘all-together’ gatherings on Sunday mornings. We are celebrating the person of God and His work through the Church throughout the week.

Christ – Greek term meaning Anointed One. Hebrew equivalent is ‘Messiah’.

Church – God’s people, called out from the world and gathered together. Sometimes called ‘the Body of Christ’. In Ruach the basis of our church life is our house church communities. Our ‘whole church’ comes together in ‘celebration’. We are part of the wider Church around the world, with Jesus as the head.

Conviction – A strong awareness that my actions have hurt and offended God.

Cross – literally the large piece of T shaped wood that was used by the Romans to execute criminals. We use the term ‘the Cross’ to describe the action of God in sending Jesus to die in our place

Demons – angels who one time rejected God’s rule and now serve their master, the Devil.

Devil – the arch enemy of Christ and His Kingdom. Defeated through Christ’s death and resurrection but still exercises influence until Christ’s return.

Devotional – the practice of spending a short or long quiet time with God in His Word and prayer.

Disciple – someone who is learning to follow Jesus and helps others do the same

Discipling – is a made up word that we use to describe the action of ‘making disciples’

Doctrine – the teachings about God and his Word

Elders – those charged with oversight over a local Church.

Faith – putting your trust in what Jesus has said and done. More than just mentally believing His words to be true, faith expresses the sense of personal reliance on the trustworthiness of God’s Word, regardless of our feelings.

Gifts – we have talents that we have been born with or have been developed through our life. As Christians we also have gifts that have been given by the Holy Spirit to help each other to grow more like Jesus.

Glory of God – the brilliance of God’s presence more fully realized as His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. It is the perfection and greatness of God being revealed.

Gospel – literally, ‘good news’. There are 4 Gospels in the Bible that tell the ‘Good News’ about Jesus. When you ‘share the Gospel’ you are explaining the good news about Jesus.

Grace – the unmerited favour of God. God accepts you, loves you, forgives you, blesses you for no other reason than he chooses to, out of his grace.

Heaven – the place of God’s eternal rule and the home of those who have put their faith in Jesus.

Hell – a place reserved for the devil and his angels and all those who reject God’s rule and offer of salvation.

Holy – living separated *from* sin and separated *for* God’s purposes. We grow in ‘holiness’ as we become more like Jesus.

Holy Spirit – sometimes called Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Jesus, the presence of Jesus who lives in the life of a Christian confirming you as a child of God, bringing power for service, gifts to help others, and a desire in you to please God.

Kingdom – God’s reign and rule. Jesus shows us what the Kingdom is like and is King of the Kingdom. It is a kingdom characterized by love, light and freedom. The kingdom will fully come when Jesus returns.

Laying on of hands – the placement of hands, normally on head or shoulders, to express empathy with the person being prayed for and as a sign of the transference of God’s blessing, power and healing.

Lord – Calling Jesus ‘Lord’ is to affirm him as your master and the one in charge of your life. He is your Lord. You are his disciple.

Mentoring – is an aspect of discipling, but normally includes a one on one relationship with a mentor.

Ministry – literally means serving others. ‘Prayer *Ministry*’ is having someone serve you by praying for you, hearing from God and accompanied by laying on of hands.

Mission – The key concept is ‘sent’. As God’s people we are sent into the world to share God’s good news in Jesus and to reflect the values and practices of His Kingdom. Being ‘Missional’ speaks of keeping mission at the forefront of our purpose as God’s community

Offering - you often hear leaders at a Celebration Service, or perhaps house church pastors talk about ‘taking up the offering’. This is the collection of money for the work of the church and its mission. Some people also use the word ‘tithe’ in this context, meaning the guide of giving 10% of income to the work of the Lord.

Old / New Testament – testament or ‘covenant’ is used to describe an agreement God makes with his people. The agreement in the *Old Testament* (first 39 books of the Bible) outlined to Abraham, Moses, David is fulfilled in the *New Testament* (the next 27 books) featuring the coming of Jesus.

Pastor – shepherd, guide, leader. Someone who has a concern for a group of Christians and guides and leads them into growth. Our house churches have ‘pastors’. Ruach also has ‘pastors’ who, as ‘elders’, exercise oversight over the whole church.

Prayer – talking to and listening to God. The phrase ‘Hearing God’s Voice’ is not to be understood in an audible sense but as a strong inner impression.

Relationship with God – Not a bible phrase, but it incorporates biblical ideas of ‘reconciliation’, ‘peace’ and ‘friendship’ with God. We come into this relationship through the actions of Jesus in his death and resurrection.

Repentance – a 180 degree turning from following our desires and plans to pleasing God instead. This change of mind includes change in actions.

Resurrection – the belief that Jesus physically rose from the grave after three days. Those who die before Jesus comes again will also rise from death like Jesus did.

Ruach – a Hebrew word, meaning breath or spirit. Ruach is a community of house churches that seek to be led and empowered by God’s Spirit.

Sacrifice / Atonement / Salvation / Redemption / Forgiveness / Justification – these are a family of words used to describe aspects of what Jesus achieved on the Cross.

Sanctification – our lifelong process of being transformed more and more into the likeness of Jesus

Saviour – The word Jesus means the one who saves. Jesus is our Saviour because he has rescued us from the present impact and eternal consequences of our sin. Our full salvation will be experienced when he returns. Then we will be saved from all evil.

Scripture – see *Bible*. Also used as a shorthand term to refer to church provided Christian education programs in schools

Sin – best way to remember: ‘sin’ has ‘l’ in the middle. It is living life outside of God’s rule. It is a state of the heart.

Sins - include things we do that we shouldn’t, and things we should do but we don’t.

Stronghold - The Bible talks about ‘strongholds’ in our minds - ways of thinking that are holding us captive in some way. Strongholds are entrenched thought patterns and behaviours that rob us of the freedom Christ has won for us.

Testimony – your story of how God has worked in your life

Theology – the study of God and his Word

Trinity – the teaching that God is One God, but three persons in One God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

Worship – to give God the honour as God. We do this by living lives surrendered to Him and pleasing to Him 24 hours a day. Expressions of this surrender and honour can include prayer, music and song, which can be done individually or corporately.

Got any other words you’d like explained?? Email ian@ruach.org.au and I’ll include them in the next edition.