

## **ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF A MCF 4 INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY AND CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER**

### **MMI AND ACCTS**

#### **1. Introduction**

Experience over many years has shown that Inductive Bible Study (IBS) and Conversational Prayer are useful tools in growing the faith of individuals and also growing MCFs. The notes below are based on the AMCF Handbook, Annex P.

#### **2. Inductive Bible Study**

##### **a. Introduction.**

There are many types of Bible study. Some look at a particular subject or person or book of the Bible. There are also different ways to study the Bible: formal lecture, small informal group, or private study. The choice of type and method depends on the group and its goals. The objectives of most Military Christian Fellowships include carrying out the Great Commission within the armed forces and helping members reach spiritual maturity. Many nations have found that Inductive Bible Study is a very effective way – though not the only way – to do this in the unique environment that military men and women face. It can be led by anyone with leadership abilities and does not require theological training.

##### **b. Definition: An Inductive Bible Study is:**

1. Study of a limited portion of Scripture, usually one chapter, sometimes less, seldom more
2. Study by a small group (6-8 people optimum, generally of approximately the same grade)
3. Study in an informal, discovery style.

##### **c. There are four guidelines for Inductive Bible Study. They are not rigid rules:**

1. Stick to the passage. Limit the study to the selected portion of Scripture. Supporting Scripture is usually not used so no one becomes discouraged by difficulty in participating.
2. Everyone participates who wants to, but no one is forced to participate.
3. No one monopolizes.
4. Answer three questions about the selected portion:
  - a. What does it say? Answer questions like Who? What? When? Where? How?
  - b. What does it mean? Is there a lesson, a promise, a command, a warning, or an example – good or bad? What can you learn about God?
  - c. What does it mean to me? What should I do with what I have discovered?

##### **d. The Leader is not the teacher; the Holy Spirit is. The leader has three duties:**

1. Prepare for the Bible study. Determine where, when, who, what, to hold the study, ensure enough Bibles for everyone, prayerfully study the lesson beforehand, and invite people.
2. Start and stop on time. Punctuality is important in the military.

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3. Enforce the Four Basic Guidelines, including: (1) What does it say? (2) What does it mean? (3) What does it mean to me?

### 3. Conversational Prayer

a. Introduction. The Bible teaches us to pray. Our experience with prayer ranges from silent to boisterous, from spontaneous to liturgical. Prayer should be both private and corporate (public). Either without the other is like day without night. They complement each other. Much public prayer, especially spontaneous public prayer, sets a poor example for new believers, using stilted language, a “holy voice”, and vague requests. Obviously Conversational Prayer is not the only way to pray. It is presented here because it is the experience of several national MCFs and other groups is that using conversational prayer produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater group vitality and unity. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray. Most of these principles are applicable to individual prayer as well as small group prayer.

b. Objective. By the end of this seminar, each of you should be able to do the following:

- 1) Define conversational prayer in your own words.
- 2) State the 4 Basic Guidelines.
- 3) State the Duties of the Leader.

c. Definition. Conversational Prayer is:

- 1) Talking with (not just to) God (the entire Trinity). (Matthew 18:19-20)
- 2) Talking as a small group, 3-6 optimum, often an Inductive Bible Study group.
- 3) Talking in an informal, conversational style using normal conversational patterns, tone of voice, and vocabulary. Say “I” when you mean yourself, “we” when you mean the group.

d. Basic Guidelines. **These are not rigid rules.**

- 1) Stick to the subject. Pray back and forth on a SINGLE subject, one person or situation at a time, in agreement (Matthew 18-19- 20) until the subject is completed. Participants introduce new subjects as the Holy Spirit prompts. Pray “faith sized”, or believable, requests.
- 2) Everybody participates who so desires, but no one is forced to participate.
- 3) No one monopolizes. Keep prayers brief, just a sentence or short paragraph. Pray as often as you like, but give AT LEAST one other person a turn before praying again. Silences are OK.
- 4) Be aware and respond in three areas:
  - a. Aware of God who is present with us.
    - *Adoration*: who He IS.
    - *Thanksgiving*: what He DOES.
    - *Attention*: what He SAYS.
  - b. Aware of Ourselves in God's presence.
    - *Confession*: what I have DONE or FAILED TO DO.
    - *Petition*: what I NEED.
  - c. Aware of others from God's point of view.
    - *Intercession*: What THEY need.

e. Duties of the Leader.

1) Prepare for the prayer time. This is primarily administrative. Find an informal, undisturbed setting. Set a time. Invite participants. Collect prayer requests as appropriate, etc.

2) Start and stop on time.

3) Enforce the Guidelines as necessary.

***NOTE: The leader is only a facilitator. The Holy Spirit illumines and guides the group.***

#### 4. Summary

Conversational prayer produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater vitality and unity in a Military Christian Fellowship. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray. Conversational prayer is talking with God as a small group in an informal, conversational style. The basic guidelines are: stick to the subject; everyone participates; and, no one monopolizes. Be aware and respond in three areas: adoration, thanksgiving, attention of God; confession and petition for ourselves; and, intercession for others. The leader must prepare for the prayer time; start and stop on time; and, enforce the Basic Guidelines.

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