

Appendix E

PARTICIPATORY BIBLE STUDIES

The five Bible studies in this Appendix should encourage participatory ways of studying the Bible. This in turn should encourage group members to understand how the Bible applies to and informs the different topics addressed by the Guides.

KEY POINTS FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATORY BIBLE STUDY

- It is really important that the Bible study is participatory, encouraging discussion in groups. If there is someone who can set a good example in leading a Bible study in a participatory way, the training facilitators should make sure they do this the first morning. Brief these people thoroughly to ensure that it really will be participatory. Otherwise one of the training facilitators could lead the first Bible study.
- It is important that the person facilitating has prepared for the study, making notes on each question.

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY FOR FACILITATORS

- Give a three minute explanation of the subject and passage to be studied. Ask someone to read out the passage.
- Divide people into small groups to read the passage again and answer just one or two questions in each group. Questions should be written on bits of paper and copies given to each group. Give them five to ten minutes to discuss.
- Bring the groups back together. Ask each question in turn, letting each group respond as it comes to their turn.
- Let people make further comments or reflections (without running over time).
- Finish with a very brief conclusion or highlight one or two things that have seemed very relevant. Close in prayer.

1 Leadership: study one

Read **1 Timothy 3:1-10** This passage describes the qualities Paul considered important for leaders in the church. What does Paul say about the person who sets their heart on being an overseer (verse 1)?

- *Which of the qualities listed for overseers and deacons (verses 2-5 and 7-9) might be important within your church or organisation and why?*
- *What danger does verse 6 say there is in having a recent convert as a church leader? Could there be the same danger for your organisation if you had a new member leading?*
- *What does verse 10 say about deacons?*

2 Leadership: study two

Read the following verses: **Exodus 3:11, Judges 6:15, 1 Samuel 9:21, 1 Kings 3:7, Jeremiah 1:6**

- *What sort of people is God choosing for leadership roles here?*
- *What are their attitudes?*
- *What model of leadership does Jesus show us in John 13:3-5?*
- *What does God say he looks at when he is selecting a leader? (1 Samuel 16:7)*

Having reviewed the qualities and attitudes a leader needs and the work to be done, many people might feel (as did some of these examples) inadequate and unable to fulfil the leadership role. This can be a healthy attitude if handled correctly, as it means the leader will look for support and not become proud.

3 One body, many parts: study one

Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-26** and **Romans 12:3-8**

ONE BODY There is much we can learn from these passages about how a group works together. In any church or organisation there are a variety of people but they form one body (1 Corinthians 12:12; Romans 12:4, 5) and should be committed to, or belong to, one another (1 Corinthians 12:14-16; 12:26).

- *What does this mean in practice for your organisation?*

MANY PARTS Each member of the group has a gift to use. In these passages several dangers are highlighted when thinking about our own gifts and those of others.

- *What warning does Romans 12:3 give us?*
- *What warning does 1 Corinthians 12:21-25 give us?*
- *What happens when we overvalue our own gifts and undervalue those of others or begin to boast about our own gifts?*

4 One body, many parts: study two

The Bible tells us that every person has gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Jesus himself also gave us some strong teaching on what happens to those who do not use their gifts (Matthew 25: 14-30).

- *Do you know what your gifts are and are you using them (Romans 12:6-8)?*

1 Corinthians 4:7 reminds us that all we have has been given to us – so there is no room for pride.

- *However, what is the opposite danger (1 Corinthians 12:15-20)?*
- *Is your organisation functioning well, like a healthy body, where each different member is playing their part? How can you encourage one another to do so?*

5 Nothing is impossible with God

Read **Judges 7:1-22**.

- *Why does the Lord say he cannot deliver Midian into the hands of Gideon and his men?*
- *What does he not want Israel to end up doing?*
- *Which men turn back first? (Verses 2-3)*

The Lord uses the way that the men drink from the river to decide who else shall not go with Gideon. The majority of the army kneel down to drink and just 300 men lap with their tongues like a dog, with their hands to their mouths. God tells Gideon that these 300 men are the ones to go into the battle.

- *How does your organisation choose who will do a certain task? (Verses 4-8)*
- *Do you seek God's advice?*

We are told that the Midianite army is huge (verse 12).

- *How does the Lord encourage Gideon not to be afraid and to believe that his small army will win the battle?*

Gideon and his men use the resources they have to great effect: they work together (verses 17-18, 20), with each man playing his part (verse 21), 'for the Lord and for Gideon' (verses 18 and 20). They know that the victory is the Lord's (verses 15 and 22).

- *How might this passage encourage your organisation as you face the tasks ahead of you?*

If God has called us and we keep our eyes fixed on him, however immense the task seems and however small our resources are, we will succeed: **'For with God nothing is impossible.'** (Luke 1:37).