

GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Introduction:

The Bible study or preaching sermon or Sunday preaching became a habitual of listening. The participation of the listener is very much lacking. To avoid this conventional Bible study/Group Bible study will give an opportunity for the groups to discuss and to listen to purely verbal exposition and these techniques are by no means at everyone’s disposal. This session offers elaborate study of Group Bible study.

Definition

Group Bible study is group discussion where there is cooperative thinking and Exchange of views, all are based on the facts discovered from the Bible.

Group Bible study is that people discover for themselves what the passage really says, what it meant for the first listeners/reader and what it should mean for us today.

Reference: Joshua 1:8 – Perpetuate, prosper, prepare, possess, practice Acts. 17:11

Type of Group Bible Study

Basically there are two kinds of Group Bible studies

1. Evangelistic Bible Study – Emphasizes the historical Jesus of Nazareth and then the eternal Christ.
2. Believer Bible Study – Seeks to know God more deeply through Jesus Christ and obey the implication of his complete Lordship.

Distinctive	EBS	BBS
Aims	To introduce Jesus Christ personally to seekers	To build up each other in the Biblical faith and practice.
Assumption	Seekers have little or no clear understanding of the gospel and religious vocabulary that a Christian often uses.	Members are basically committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and have a general grasp of the message of the Bible.
Passages	Initially gospel narratives which Jesus focus clearly on Jesus Unique encounters with people	Any part of the bible depending on needs and maturity of the group
Application	Direct or indirect appeal to consider Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour	Normally direct and including all new teaching and practical areas of life.

BELIEVERS BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Write down each mutual responsibility Christians have for one another.

- Romans 12:10 a, b _____
- Romans 13:8 _____
- Romans 15:7 _____
- Gal 5:13 _____
- Gal 6:2 _____
- Eph. 4:2 _____
- Eph. 5:21 _____
- Col 3:16a _____

I Thes 5:11 a, b _____
Heb: 10:24 _____
Jam 5:16a, b _____

The Leader's part in the whole Ex. 18:13-16

The leader's responsibilities to the group I Pet. 5:1-5

The Leader's heart attitude to young believers I Thess 2:7-12

The Leader's relationship to other leaders (Mark 10:35-45)

The Leader's relationship to Jesus Christ (John 13:12-17)

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUP BIBLE STUDY

HEALTHY GROUP BIBLE STUDY

The examples in Acts suggest some characteristics of a healthy bible study:

- People come with curiosity, humility, expectancy and courage and no complacency
- The Bible is the authority – not the leader, opinions or subjective experiences.
- Members interact honestly with the passage and with each other – do not play religious games
- Jesus Christ is the ultimate focus – not merely correct answers.
- His Holy Spirit is free to enlighten and convince hearts and mind.

ADVANTAGE OF GBS

- Personal investigation encouraged
- Passage is led to speak of itself
- Participants minds are fully involved
- Preaching of Holy Spirit through individuals
- Prejudices and misunderstandings are checked
- Personal faith is reinforced and challenged
- Purity in heart as a result of honest sharing
- Precise communication
- Person to person relationship grows
- Professionals are not needed
- Prospective leaders grow
- Progress in fellowship and dynamism of group.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD GBS LEADER:

- Respect the authority of the Bible
- Love and openness towards people
- Encourage the people to answer
- Be affirming-listening
- Periodic summarize
- Be sure to finish on time
- Relaxed attitude
- Don't be afraid of silence
- Don't be content with one answer
- Admit ignorance and fable
- Give time to pray

RESPONSIBILITY AS A GROUP LEADER

- To help members to carry out the aim of a group study, prepare well
- Encourage an atmosphere where people feel “Pardon is always possible”
- Guide the group to study and discuss the passage with helpful questions
- Stimulate healthy interaction and fellowship among the members.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SERMON & GBS

Characteristics	Sermon	Group Bible Study
Settings	Hall	Home/office
Types	One	Variety
Size	20-300	8-12
Length	Up to 75 minutes	60 minutes
Arrangements	Chairs in row	Circle
Dress	Best dress	Casual
Format focus	Lecture	Interactive discussion
Leadership	More oriented to content	Relationship building
Tone	Formal	Friendly & informal
Benefit	Few	To all

PREPARING THE BIBLE STUDY

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

“Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, that’ all it will be – a method”

“Prayer is crucial to Bible Study ‘when you get into the plane’-When you start don’t turn on the engines until you pray’

John 16:13-15, tells us that the one who guides us into all truth, the one who takes the things of God and reveals them to us, is the Holy spirit, our resident Teacher. So ask god, by His spirit, to lead you into all truth and to open your eyes “that you may behold wondrous things” out of His word. Begin with prayer- and continue with an attitude of prayer.

1. Pray for:

- Yourself to understand and apply
- Members of the group
- Working of the Holy Spirit
- Definite and specific results and goals.

B. PERSONAL STUDY

- Think of your group and select a passage to meet the needs of the members
- Read and reread and study the passage using personal Bible study method. Allow God to speak to you through this passage
- Note down all the points related to Personal Bible Study in your own words
- Preparing good questions for discussion is very important.
- Prepare the outline and give the title and subheadings for the specific passage.

CONNECTING BRIDGE FOR GBS AND PBS:**BRIDGE**

The bridge for connecting PBS and GBS is stimulating questions.

Questions are the leader's best tools to stimulate others to examine the facts of the text and to discover significance and application.

PILLARS FOR BRIDGE

- Prepare short and specific questions. But the answer should not be so simple like yes or no.
- Questions should cover all three areas (observation, interpretation and application)
- Note down all the points related to OIA in your words
- Preparing good questions is very important
- Prepare the outline and give the title and subheadings for the specific passage.

LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY**BEFORE GBS**

- Let the place of meeting have proper lighting and adequate ventilation
- Same eye level – sitting in a circle
- Start on time
- Extra Bible for new comers
- Ask them to introduce one another so that everybody knows each other

DURING GBS:

1. Start with prayer
2. Give an introduction briefly and clearly
3. Ask the members to read the passage
4. Help the members to understand the difficult words and concepts by using contemporary language
5. Allow others to ask questions and encourage other members to answer questions.
6. Listen attentively and acknowledge the contribution of the members
7. Summarize the passage
8. Finish it on time and close it with the challenge to apply.

Problem tensions arising during the Bible study

Silence: If there is no response from the group the reason may be your question was too simple. Or too complex 1. Try rewording the question 2. You can ask the answer from one particular person.

The shy one: Include him with a smile or casual comment. Ask his opinion on something he can handle. But never embarrass any one by forcing participation.

The domineering talker: If one person talks too much, gently suggest, “Let’s hear someone else’s view point”.

Comparing religions or churches: Avoid it, this is usually fruitless and moves the discussion away from the text.

The distracter: Is he one who confuses with many cross references? Or one who keeps introducing other subjects? Try “That’s interesting, but let’s stick to this text and dig deeper into its meaning first.

Questions you can’t answer: Though well prepared you are not expected to know all the answers to questions spontaneously raised. If no one has an answer, be honest and say “I never thought about that or I don’t know” This frankness can do wonders for the group atmosphere

AFTER GBS

- Pray, plan and prepare for the next GBS
 - Spend time with new corners
 - Trouble makers may be counseled
 - Evaluate with keen leaders
 - Inform the group about the next meeting (Place, time scripture portion etc)
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