

BIBLE STUDIES

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

The last words of Christ before His departure from this world to those whom He had trained to carry on His work are of utmost importance to the church today. Notice His exact words: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8 KJV).

This command was given not only to all those who heard Him speak, but also to all who would accept Him in the ages to come. They were to make known to the world the story of the Father's love and salvation.

Revival and church renewal take place when members use their Bibles to witness for Christ. Ellen White has written of "a great reformatory movement among God's people . . . Hundreds and thousands were . . . visiting families, and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 126).

Duties of the Lay Bible Minister

The work to which a person is called when he or she becomes a lay Bible minister can best be described as follows:

1. *Bible studies.* Most of the time that the lay Bible minister has available will be used to conduct personal Bible studies with individuals and families who have expressed an interest in studying the Word of God. Each study will take one or two hours a week. A regular routine of appointments is important in order to build relationships and help people grow in discipleship.
2. *Inquirers class.* Lay Bible ministers assist with the pastor's Bible class and bring their students to this class as they begin to attend church. (Sometimes the special Sabbath School class for prospective members is called the discovery class or visitor's class. It is often led by an elder or a lay Bible minister because the pastor has two or more congregations to work with each Sabbath and cannot attend Sabbath School.)
3. *Missing member visits.* From time to time the pastor may assign the names of former or missing members to visit. This will give you contact with people with whom you will be able to study after you gain their friendship and confidence.
4. *An undershepherd.* The lay Bible minister will help the pastor seek and find the lost. He or she provides the pastoral caring and attention which the pastor will not have the time to give to each prospective member. Often people turn to Christ and begin to think of joining a church at times of crisis in their lives. This means that the lay Bible minister must help to meet their emotional, economic and social needs as well as their spiritual needs and religious questions. Much time may be spent just listening. Time will also be invested in helping prospective members to make friends among church members, attend classes that are important to their growth, such as stop-smoking programs or family life seminars, and make use of the aid provided by Adventist Community Services and other social services.
5. *Finding prospects.* A lay Bible minister is constantly on the alert for people who may be ready to enter into Bible study. He or she will be sensitive to possibilities among friends, relatives, work associates, visitors at church, newcomers in the community, participants in outreach seminars and those who respond to Adventist media ministries and awareness activities. And he or she will learn to invite prospects to begin Bible studies.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

A Shared Vision for the Local Church. Help your church develop a vision of its ministry by understanding the biblical foundation and seven essentials of local church ministry.

A Simple and Easy Way to Study the Bible With Others by Don and Marjorie Gray is the briefest and most practical how-to book available.

Does Your Church Need a Doctor? by James W. Zackrison.

Expect Great Things: How to Be a Happy, Growing Christian, by Richard O'Ffill. A template for successful Christian living, with the goal of being like Jesus.

How to Find a Bible Study by Don Dronen. Full of faith-sharing ideas and resources.

How to Find and Reach Receptive People by James W. Zackrison.

Lifestyles of the Remnant, by Keavin Hayden. The author takes another look at church standards, taking them out of the context of legalism or orthodoxy—presents much needed principles.

Nine Facets of the Effective Small-Group Leader by Carl George with Clarence Schilt. Included are nine videos and a workbook that explain how to succeed with your adult ministries committee.

Persuasion by Mark Finley is a readable, practical book that focuses on the special skills needed to help people make decisions.

Power Witnessing: How to Witness to Different Personalities, by David Farmer. Explains temperament theory and how to tailor one's witness to individual personalities so as to appeal to their unique world view.

Search for Certainty Bible Study Guides, by Mark Finley. Presents traditional Adventist doctrines in a clear, carefully-reasoned, faith-building way—30 lessons in a set, available by the set or in packs of 100 per title.

Studying Together, by Mark Finley. This ready-reference Bible handbook assists you in studying Christ-centered truths with friends and neighbors.

Ten Who Left by Fred Cornforth and Tim Lale tells the story of people who have left the Adventist church and why.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.