

MEETING WITH ESTABLISHED STUDENT GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

This is a special lecture for coaches. Next season you are going to go and meet your students who were studying in the program last year already. What are you going to do with them during your first meeting ?

I. ENCOURAGE THEM IN THEIR STUDY

Encourage the men in their study by basing it on the Word of God. We suggest that you do that through re-emphasizing Ephesians 4:11-12 and 2 Timothy 2:2. Let us look at these Bible verses again together. Maybe it is good to do a review and be freshly reminded.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

It is New Life for Churches’ ministry to train people for Ephesians 4:11. If you read the earlier verses of chapter four, you see that Christ went to heaven, and as He went to heaven, he gave a gift to the church. That gift contained five parts.

A. Apostles

It contained apostles, sent out ones. The word “apostle” has two uses in the New Testament. First it is used for the twelve key disciples of Jesus. Later it is used for other people. And today we use another word. We use the word “missionary” instead of the word “apostle.” An apostle or a missionary is one who is sent from his own home and culture, into another culture and another language. So, if you work here in your own country, you are normally not a missionary. If you work in your own country with Gypsies, which is a whole separate culture, then you would be a missionary or apostle to the Gypsies. If you go from Ukraine into another language, then you would be doing missionary work. If you leave your native land and go to another country with other customs, like Mongolia, or so, that would be doing missionary work.

B. Prophets

Now, there is a lot of confusion about who are “prophets.” Most of the prophets were people who simply preached. They mostly told forth the message of God. Some of them sometimes foretold the future. We often think that prophets **only** foretell the future. That is a wrong concept. Even Abraham was called a prophet. Mostly they were preachers. There were both men and women prophets in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Example: Let us take a small boy. Maybe he is seven, eight, ten years old, and you, as a parent, are telling him a lot of things that will be happening in his life. “Well, you know you have already finished kindergarten, and now you are in school, and pretty soon you are going to go to college, and maybe later to university.” Perhaps he attended a wedding, and you explained to him, “When you grow up, you will also find some beautiful person that you want to spend the rest of your life

with.” So, because he is young, you tell him about many things that will happen later. What do you tell to your grandmother? “Now grandmother, you are already an old woman. Pretty soon you are going to feel sick. You will need a cane. You will not see very well. Then we need to take you to the hospital. And then, yes, you will die.” Maybe you do not say that to your grandmother. Do you see that there is a lot more to tell to a young boy than to an old lady? Is that right?

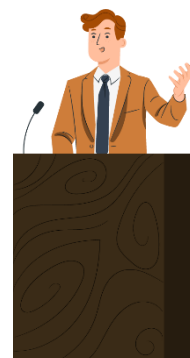
Now, think about the church. In the Old Testament before Jesus came, there was much to tell about Jesus’ coming. After Jesus came there were still some things to tell about the church, and how the church must prepare itself for the second coming of the Lord. But now, the church is two thousand years old, and many historical events show that it seems like Jesus will come shortly. So, what is there still to foretell about the future? Not very much because we do not have two thousand years more to go. Maybe twenty, but not two thousand. I believe absolutely, that there are still prophets today. But there are not nearly as many prophets needed now, at the end of time, as in the Old Testament at the beginning of time. So, most of the emphasis of the word “prophet” in the New Testament simply means preacher. Preaching / prophesying is simply sharing God’s word and its future applications to our daily lives.

C. Evangelists

Then he gave “*some to be evangelists*”. An evangelist is somebody that works with unbelievers. Usually, an apostle or a missionary also works with unbelievers. But an evangelist works in his own culture, in his own language. So, it is a ministry for you within your country where you feel comfortable, where people understand you. We may say in your Jerusalem, in your Judea, and in your Samaria. But it is work with unbelievers. The Bible-lending libraries on the street, prison ministries, ministries in the army, and teaching groups of unbelievers, starting new churches. All of these are the things of an evangelist.

D. Pastors

He gave “*some to be pastors*.” The pastor is to be the leader. The head of the home. The head of the church. He is the shepherd of the sheep. His job is to the believers. He does not work with the wolves and the bears. He does not work with the goats. He works with the sheep, with the lambs of the flock. His job is to heal them--physically, emotionally, spiritually. To heal their marriages. His job is to help them produce children--spiritual children, godly children, children that will become beautiful productive Christians. It is his job to see that the flock is fed; that the people are fed spiritually. That they are healthy spiritually. That they are comfortable spiritually. And ***that they reproduce***.



E. Teachers

God has given teachers. People who have a special gift of training others, especially in the deep teachings of the Bible. Not just the shallow things of Holy Communion and of baptism and of speaking in tongues. But the deep things of measuring spirituality. Of following the Ten Commandments, by not being greedy, not jealous, and many other such things. Not measuring by the outward appearance of blouses, earrings, make-up, other things. Instead measuring as God measures--the heart, purity, holiness, the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit. There are several places in the New Testament where a whole category of spiritual items are mentioned. The Church needs very good teaching / training about these Biblical Principles.

You may call such a person a trainer, an instructor, you may call him a professor, a coach. They all come under the category of teachers. Mentoring is precisely the ministry of New Life for Churches .

F. Preparing people for service

Now, what are those five categories of leaders supposed to do? Notice that each category is in the plural form. So, every church ought to have two apostles, two preachers / prophets, two pastors, two trainers / teachers or more. What are those five groups of people meant to do? What is their ministry? ***“To prepare God’s people for works of service”*** (Ephesians 4:12). Every member in the church must do something. And every church member should know what he is doing. He should know what the pastor wants him to do. Now how does the New Life for Churches’ ministry help these church members to become workers?

All over the world there are churches that are not following the pattern of Jesus. They have not been discipling others to do spiritual work. Because of this churches are suffering spiritually. Therefore, spiritual leadership begins by going to ordinary church members and inviting them to start studying the Bible. The purpose of NLC training is, ***“so that the body of Christ may be built up”*** (Ephesians 4:12). Then, through the studying of the Word of God, they are no longer just church members because they have come out of verse twelve and are raised up into the category of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers in verse eleven.

That is exactly what Jesus did. He went to ordinary believers, and He called them out, he invited them to come with him, to study and to be trained. After several years of training, they were no longer ordinary believers. They had become a special team. A team of elitists. They became the five apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers — who were after three years the new church leaders. They were the ‘sent out’ ones. This is exactly what your ministry is: to begin with ordinary church members, train them, and lead them to become the leaders talked about in verse eleven.

I think you understand this, but there are many of your students who still do not understand this. It is very good in the very first lesson to discuss this with them. Then, at the end of the seminar, you give the course book and an assignment to start studying lesson one at home before the next seminar. If your students see that this is from the Bible, they are much more willing to follow you, to believe you, and to study hard. If they think that you have no reason except that you simply want them to do that, they will question, “Who are you? Why should we listen to you?” But if you say, “Jesus did it, the Bible says it,” their motivation will suddenly change. Then you will talk about practical assignments. You will turn to 2 Timothy 2:2 and say, “There we see that the apostle Paul was sharing the gospel with other leaders, and he said, *“the things you have heard me say ... entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”* (2 Timothy 2:2). Let us look at these categories.

Paul is writing to Timothy and he said, “I (number one) have given something to you, Timothy (number two).” Then he says, *“in the presence of many witnesses”*. And that is the end of the witnesses. Let us come back to the witnesses in just a little bit.

G. Raising up reliable men

He goes on to say, *“The things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men.”* So, we have Paul who has given these things to Timothy, with the instruction to give it to *“reliable men.”* Is Timothy to give it to everybody? Nooo! Only to reliable men who will share it with other men who are capable also. So, I believe technically there are four people groups involved: Paul, Timothy, the faithful men, and the other capable people.

Now, somehow, we seem to have lost the witnesses. Now what is a witness? Maybe some of you have seen a car accident or some other accident. It goes something like this: (Bang!!!). Now, those two cars are involved in the accident. On the side of the street there is somebody standing there witnessing everything. He says, “I saw this. I saw that. I saw that.”

So, we see that witnesses are not involved in the process. They are observing the process. You have another word for those people, “listeners,” I believe they are called. They are not very much involved. They sit in the back row. They listen, but they do not do their homework. They are not involved in the process. There are only four categories involved in the process. You need to communicate that to your students.

Paul did not say, “Give these Biblical teachings for leaders to everybody.” Paul told Timothy to give it to faithful people. So, apparently there were some unfaithful people. And Paul said, “Oh, do not give it to them!” So, Paul is saying there must be a selection process. You must learn to say “no” to some people. You must select key people that want to do something for Jesus, that want to have a spiritual ministry.

Every student doing Bible courses above the “*Basic Christian Life*” level, must have a spiritual ministry. He must preach or teach or do evangelism or whatever. But he must regularly do something for Jesus, at least once a month. Then, if he has a good grade, , you are going to motivate him to teach other capable people. And he will not, and probably cannot, do that unless he is convinced this is a Biblical principle. Jesus did it with His disciples. Paul did it with Luke, with Mark, with Timothy and Titus, and with other people. Paul did the same thing Jesus did. Your students must be willing to follow that pattern. And so, you will impress on them during your very first meeting with them the central role they are playing in the propagation of the faith here in the country.

So, number one is to encourage them in their study by basing it on the Word of God.

II. BUILD RAPPORT AND GATHER BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEN

You want to make sure you get off to a friendly start. Some are very tired. Some are very busy. Some come to class, and they say, “Hum. Yes, I think I remember you from before. Oh yes! I studied for nine months under you.” People are preoccupied with their minds in many different areas of their life. So, you need to rebuild relationships. You need to rebuild priorities. You need to help them focus on each other and on each other’s needs.

You will want to collect some information. Maybe there is some information about them or their families that you do not have which could be very helpful. Many of them have been involved in a new ministry in the spring and summer and you should write that down. Some of them have special struggles and difficulties, and you want to write that down in your prayer notebook. Explain to them that you are deeply interested in them, and that some of this personal information will enable you to do a better job of training them.

This is a real Bible college or Christian university program, and therefore you need some of that information decently and in order. Especially as the men go on to other courses , it becomes very important that your records show: which course they took, if they really finished it, what grade they receive, which year it was, and so forth and so forth. Explain that there is an opportunity to receive a Bachelors Degree and credit from a recognized seminary or the NLC university . However, that is only possible if they study in a formal way and if you have the proper records for it.

Let me give you a list of things that you want to collect for your student records.

A. Their name

That is very helpful. Instead of saying, “You, you, you, you.”

B. A student number

Every student should have a special number. Sometimes names change, or a student moves to another city. Keeping the same number guarantees that all information and records can be traced. This provides honesty and credibility for a student later on.

C. You want to have their address and telephone number

So, you can write to them, send them a Christmas greeting, or phone them for an emergency.



D. You want their birth date

Many people are asking about your students, how old they are, and are they qualified for church leadership. To simply say, "He is a young person", is not sufficient. Young. What is that? Sixteen years old, or 36 years old? Or maybe 51. I do not think you are old when you are 51. So, you need a birth date.

E. The denomination

Maybe you have some group members that do not belong to your denomination. They may be part of another church or denomination. You want to write down what church they belong to. There may be several churches represented in one group.

F. You want to write down their ministry

Their position or function in the church, for the past and in the present. So, it gives you a little bit of a picture of their spiritual growth in ministry.

G. Then their wife's name

You should try to learn that name. It is so much nicer if you can say, "How is Galya?" instead of saying, "How is your wife?" It is a little bit embarrassing when you say, "How is your wife?" "What? I am not married." That is a little bit embarrassing for you.

H. The number of children is nice to know

I. Level of education

You may be surprised about the high level of education some of your students have. And you may say, "Oh. I better know my lesson material because there are some pretty intelligent people here."

J. Then you want to know their profession and occupation

K. Maybe it would be helpful to write down what languages they know

Maybe some of them know some German or some English and you can encourage them because later on you may need a translator for visitors.

L. Application, letter of permission

For the higher levels, each student must fill out an application form and he must present a signed letter from his pastor.

III. INFORMALLY EVALUATE WITH THEM THE COURSES THEY HAVE TAKEN

Ask the students to pick out some of the highlights from each course. Let us say course one or three of *Basic Christian Life*, or the *Galatians or Romans* course, or whatever level. You ask for some testimonies. You remind them how they were blessed when they learned some of these key principles. You mention how excited you are with their spiritual growth. And that you are deeply grateful that they have come, and that they have given you their time so you can work together with them again. Here are several questions you can ask to stimulate a discussion.

A. What has been the most meaningful?

From all the things we studied and talked about last year, what was the most meaningful to you? What was most helpful?

B. Has the material been challenging? In what way? Please share how

C. Did it stimulate you to study the Scriptures?

D. Did it create opportunities or desires to start doing more spiritual work for Jesus?

E. How about your personal schedule?



How much time did it really take to study every week? Six hours, three hours, an hour and a half? And there is a quiet brother, and you think you have had enough answers. Oh no! You say, "And you brother, but how much time did you usually spend on the lesson?" "25 minutes." That is why he is not speaking. That is why he is quiet. Draw him in. In a moment I will show you that you need to use that information.

F. Have the practical assignments helped you in your ministry?

One godly brother told me that he felt a burden, a block. He could not preach. And the pastor asked, "Will you preach?" He said, "No, I cannot, sorry." But after church several people went into the town. There was a group of people there and they started doing some evangelism. There were one hundred people listening. Different people were preaching, and they said, "Brother, will you close this meeting?" And the Holy Spirit just came upon him, and he spoke a few words and prayed, and thirty people came to repent of their sins, to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. And without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. That is beautiful. Praise God. And so, ask them if the practical ministry assignments have been helpful.

G. Ask them about their longterm personal goals

They may say, "Well, I hope to find a beautiful wife, and I would like to have thirteen wonderful children." That is okay, but as you go around the group you hope that you are going to get some spiritual answers like: "I would like to be a preacher," or "I want to do evangelism," or "I want to start a new church," or "I would like to become a pastor," or something like that. And that is the perfect moment for you to encourage them. "What a wonderful goal." Later on, you ask people to pray for each other. Maybe two by two. "You two, and you two, and you two." And you begin to pray for each other. That is a very important part of that first meeting.

Write their answers down. You need that information. It gives you insight into the person's life.

IV. GET TO KNOW THE LEADER OF THE GROUP BETTER

Now, with this I am assuming the group has another local leader you are accountable to. Here are two reasons why you want to get to know him better:

A. Get feedback from him on how you can help him and his group better.

Maybe a new schedule a half hour later or an hour earlier would be very helpful to them. He can explain to you why some of the students seem to be struggling. Or why a certain student could use some extra material, because of his higher education or intelligence.

B. You can help him to be successful in the management of his group.

Maybe there is a week when you cannot be there, and he will be leading the group. You can discover if...

- there is a real sense of accountability that he has for his group.
- he has some sort of a vision to help each of the students to be successful in the church ?
- he has an adequate recordkeeping system. You can help him to set up a good recordkeeping system for the group. Explain so that he understands why records need to be kept and how he needs to do that. And that once every three months is not sufficient, it is not a reality, but that he must do this every time the class meets.
- a growing personal discipleship dynamic is developing. He is the perfect person for you to disciple personally, like Jesus disciplined John in a special way. He is probably the one that has the real future leadership capability and potential.

V. OBSERVE THE LEADER AND PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP

To encourage the leader and the students. To observe how the local group leader is doing if he has already some responsibility, or perhaps to introduce the new course to them. Sometimes there is a good group meeting and you can immediately introduce the new course. Sometimes only half the group is there and it is better to wait with introducing the course till the next time.

To simply encourage them from the Word of God.

VI. GIVE PRACTICAL HELP ON TIME MANAGEMENT AND HOW TO STUDY

A. Give time to your study

Minimally you need to remind them that the advanced courses will impose a social change in their life. This is no longer the *Basic Christian life* course. This does not only take an hour and a half or so a week. The home time that is needed to prepare a lesson depends on their education, on their abilities, and on a number of things. So, you need to tell them that they must rearrange their social life.

B. Set aside a place.

He must have a definite place of study that is prepared every time, without clutter, without other things. It is his personal place to study. It is clean. It is ready to sit down and start. There is good light, and his books and Bible are all right there on a little shelf. It can be in a bedroom or wherever, as long as there is a special little place for him.

C. Schedule specific study time.

Then he needs to have a special time. He and his wife together need to decide on a special time two or three times a week, or whatever, that he will be there to study and there will be no other things happening. The neighbor comes for a visit, and he wants some help. All right, you gladly agree to help him but not right now. Now it is impossible but an hour later after you are finished you will gladly do it. Right now, you are studying, you are busy, you are not available. Your mother comes for a visit. You open your notebook. You say, "Did you have an appointment mom? No? Whoops. I am busy." You need to tell your students that if they do not prioritize study, or it will not happen. They need help from their wives in order to have this time.

D. Form new habits.

If they want to become faithful students, they need to develop new habits. Now, let me give you a warning. Old habits are much more comfortable than new habits. So, you usually want to fall back into the old habits. When a student loses out, when he starts performing less and less, you can begin by asking him right here, "Are you establishing this new lifestyle?" Old habits are just like old beds; they are very comfortable, easy to get into, but very difficult to get out of. You need to tell your students that. Some of your students are going to be discouraged with themselves, and you need to say, "Now, you do not need to be discouraged. That is normal. Just try again and again." Do all you can to help them to develop this new discipline. One very good thing to give them after a couple of seminars is the lecture on **"Successful Study Habits."**

I hope you will be blessed as you put this lecture in practice.

Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

Practical assignment

Completed

- Make a written plan according to the outline of this lecture for each group you will be leading in the next three months. Explain how you will deal with each of the six main points

