

## **LAMPLIGHTERS INTERNATIONAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT IS LAMPLIGHTERS?**

Lamplighters is a Christ-centered discipleship ministry that is designed to lead Christians into a deeper personal faith in Jesus Christ. The ministry consists of a series of discipleship Bible studies (printed materials and software), leadership training materials, and other ministry resources.

### **HOW DID THE LAMPLIGHTERS MINISTRY GET STARTED?**

The Lamplighters discipleship ministry began in 1991 when a group of Christians met at a Baptist Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota to study the first Lamplighters study of 1 Timothy. The students became excited about the Word of God as they learned many important biblical truths and began to share their enthusiasm with others. Another class was organized when the second Lamplighters study met the next fall and two more classes were organized the following year to study the books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. Interest in the Lamplighters ministry spread to other churches as pastors and other Christian leaders heard about the Lamplighters ministry and inquired about the possibility of incorporating the discipleship materials into their church ministries.

### **HOW CAN THE LAMPLIGHTERS MATERIALS BE USED?**

The Lamplighters Bible studies have been used effectively as a Bible Study guide, as study materials for one-on-one and group discipleship situations, as Senior High and Adult teacher's manuals, as student curriculum for Sunday School classes, and as the core curriculum for the traditional church-based Lamplighters ministry.

### **HOW CAN I USE A LAMPLIGHTERS STUDY TO DISCIPLE SOMEONE ELSE?**

The Bible study leader and the disciple complete their lessons independently and meet for approximately one hour each week. During this time they share the spiritual truths they have learned, discuss the answers to the questions on the weekly lesson, and review the Leader's Guide answers. They continue to meet until the Bible study is completed.

### **WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER INCORPORATING THE LAMPLIGHTERS SMALL GROUP MINISTRY IN MY CHURCH?**

There are many advantages to using the Lamplighters discipleship ministry in a local church. In an age when few of God's people are spending quality time in personal study, the Lamplighters ministry has helped many congregations reach new levels of commitment to the Word of God. Secondly, the Lamplighters ministry offers the individual participants an opportunity to share personal insights they learned from God's Word and benefit from the spiritual insights of other believers. The ministry provides an atmosphere within healthy discussion of biblical truth can flourish within a controlled atmosphere that does not allow for spiritual digression or theological error. The inter-personal edification often produces great unity and spiritual growth within the church. Thirdly, the traditional Lamplighters ministry format allows the opportunity for the pastor to teach at a deeper level during the Corporate Teaching time. The students have already acquired an understanding of the passage and are ready to receive spiritual

"meat."

### **HOW CAN I USE THE LAMPLIGHTERS STUDIES TO START A BIBLE INSTITUTE?**

Many of God's people desire a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Word of God because they believe it contains the answers to life's greatest questions. Through the ministry of the Word (Ro. 10:17), the Lord continues to raise up disciples who will be the Christian leaders of tomorrow. Some of these disciples sense God leading to receive additional biblical training and they venture off to Bible colleges or seminaries even though they are not called to full-time Christian ministry. Others struggle for years wondering if God has called them to full-time Christian service. The Lamplighters ministry can be used as the core curriculum of a Bible Institute where disciples can be trained by the local church (cf. Acts 13:1 ff.). Students in the traditional Lamplighters ministry could be given the option of taking the class for personal edification or for credit toward a Bible Institute diploma. Supplementary reading, research papers, and semester exams would be required for Bible Institute credit. An annual graduation service at the conclusion of the spring semester complete with the presentation of Bible Institute diplomas would be a fitting conclusion to the academic year.

### **WHAT ARE THE MAIN ASPECTS OF A TYPICAL LAMPLIGHTERS SMALL GROUP STUDY?**

The traditional (church-wide) Lamplighters ministry approach consists of four primary aspects:

1. A time of personal Bible study when the student completes the weekly lesson prior to the scheduled meeting time.
2. The weekly Group Discussion Time when those who participate in a study meet together in small groups of six to ten men or women and share their biblical insights.
3. The Corporate Teaching Time of 15-20 minutes when the Pastor teaches from the same passage.
4. The Question and Answer Time of 10-15 minutes when the students are given the opportunity to ask questions about the passage or lesson.

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY?**

Inductive Bible Study is the teaching method of asking biblical questions of God's people in order to help them retain biblical truth. This teaching model asks the students questions and guides them to a correct understanding of the biblical truth they are studying.

The biblical foundation for the inductive method personal study is based upon solid biblical principles:

1. The priesthood of the believer that enables the believer to have a continuing personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:5).
2. The personal teaching ministry of the Word by means of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 119; 1 Jn. 2:27).
3. The biblical example of New Testament believers who received God's endorsement for searching the Scriptures to avoid doctrinal error (Acts 17:11). In addition to these principles, spiritual growth is directly related to the individual believer's

relationship to the Word of God (Jn. 17:17; Ro. 10:17). Very few of God's people are able to maintain a vital personal relationship with Christ without a right relationship with the Word of God. When Jesus ministered to the multitudes, He used various means to communicate truth (preaching, teaching, parables, illustrations from nature, etc.). He used questions to provoke His listeners to consider important truths (Matt. 16:15; Mk. 8:17; Jn. 13:38). Lamplighters Bible studies should never be used as a replacement for the didactic presentation of the Word - the preaching and teaching by those called to equip the saints (Eph. 4:11-13). Lamplighters is a ministry that has been designed to help God's people develop a better personal relationship with the Word of God. In turn, the student will gain greater desire and love for the Word of God.

### **HOW DO I INTRODUCE LAMPLIGHTERS SMALL GROUP MINISTRY INTO MY CHURCH?**

The inductive Bible study format used in the Lamplighters ministry has been used greatly to help many believers grow spiritually. Even though the inductive method of discipleship training may be familiar to the Pastor, it may appear new, novel or distinctively New Evangelical to those in the church if the ministry is not introduced with wisdom and patience. The Pastor should do a personal spiritual inventory of the congregation before he considers introducing the ministry to the church. The Pastor should have concrete answers to the following questions:

1. Are there people in the church who are presently involved in an inductive Bible study? If so, what has been their experience?
2. Are there people in the church or community who have expressed an interest in a Bible study?
3. Is the congregation as a whole able to evaluate new ministry opportunities with an open mind or do they view all change as a threat or even compromise?
4. Is the congregation able to evaluate new ideas from a biblical perspective?
5. Has the church recently experienced a change in the ministry that has been unsettling to the church?
6. Have new ideas been introduced that have been proven unsuccessful? If so, why?
7. Does the church feel a need to become more involved with the Word of God or does it seem satisfied to receive a majority of spiritual instruction from the regular preaching of the Word?

These and other investigative questions will help the Pastor anticipate the initial response of the congregation to the concept of inductive Bible study. Prior to the formal introduction of the Lamplighters ministry to the congregation, it is a good idea for the Pastor to teach a brief series of messages about the believer's need to develop a vital personal relationship with the Word of God. The Pastor should then follow up with the key people in the church to determine their response to the truths he has taught. If the response is positive or at least not negative, the Pastor should introduce the concept of an inductive Bible study and the Lamplighters ministry to them. When the Pastor has effectively communicated the concept of an inductive Bible study and the Lamplighters ministry to the lay leaders in the church, he is ready to introduce the Lamplighters ministry to the entire church.

The Pastor should then introduce the Lamplighters ministry to the church. Before the Pastor presents the Lamplighters ministry to the church, he should contact the Lamplighters office to make sure that he has a complete list of the essential aspects of the ministry before he makes his presentation. The Pastor should give specific information about the initiation of the first Lamplighters study (the name of the first Book to be studied, the day of the week the Bible study will meet, and the beginning date of the first class). The Pastor should allow enough time for the selection and training of the Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders, the ordering of Lamplighters materials (four to six weeks), and the completion of other responsibilities prior to the first class usually two to three months (note: see "When to start a Lamplighters Study" for suggested starting times). Other details such as the exact meeting night schedule, the names of the Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders and classroom locations do not need to be given to the congregation at this time.

### **WHEN SHOULD I CONSIDER STARTING A LAMPLIGHTERS MINISTRY IN MY CHURCH?**

There is no wrong time to start a Lamplighters study if there are enough people who will make a serious commitment to meet for a weekly study. However, careful planning should be given to determine how to gain the maximum participation in the ministry from the first study. Mid-September and late January or early February have been the best times to begin the traditional Lamplighters ministry in churches. A start date of early September or late January allows the church families enough time to adjust to the new schedule after their children have returned to school and enables a class to complete a 12-week study by December or April. Regardless of when a class meets, it is important to complete the study as originally planned. The exact dates the class will meet should be determined in advance and given to the class members during the Orientation (first) Meeting. The selection of the dates that the church will meet for the Lamplighters Bible Study should be done very carefully (remember one extra date is needed, e.g., a four lesson study will meet for five weeks). The Pastor should examine the church calendar carefully and decide the exact dates the classes will meet. He should explain to the congregation in advance if the classes will meet every week or if the Lamplighters classes will not meet on certain weeks. The Pastor should reschedule the Lamplighters study to another time of the year if the class will miss more than two weeks during the study.

### **WHAT LAMPLIGHTERS BIBLE STUDY SHOULD WE USE FIRST?**

The selection of the first study is very important to the success of the Lamplighters ministry in a church. The first study should be short (four to six weeks) so that those participating in the ministry have the opportunity to become accustomed to the format without becoming overburdened. If this study format is new to your church, a shorter study will give the church an opportunity to assess the ministry at the completion of the study and make the necessary adjustments before the next study. Studies such as Ruth, Esther, 2 Timothy (four or eight weeks), James (five or ten weeks) are excellent choices for a beginning study.

### **WHAT PREPARATIONS ARE NECESSARY?**

The Pastor should select the Group Leaders and make the necessary arrangements for their leadership training as soon as the announcement has been made to begin a Lamplighters study. The Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders must be thoroughly trained prior to the first study. The Pastor should contact the Lamplighters office for assistance about how he can train the leaders most effectively. The Pastor should try to select the exact number of Group leaders for the first study. This can be difficult since the total number of participants cannot be determined until the official sign-up has been completed. The Pastor should attempt to estimate the total number of men and women by doing an informal survey of the congregation. He should contact potential Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders and ask them about serving in the ministry. He should also inform them of the qualifications of their leadership positions and give them a brief description of the ministry responsibilities. The Group Leaders should also be informed that they need to participate in a Leadership Training Time (three to four hours) that covers the various aspects of their ministries. Once the Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders have been confirmed, it is a good idea to contact a couple extra leaders for possible leadership in case more people sign up for the study than expected. The Pastor should be careful to inform these "extra" Group Leaders that they will only serve as Group Leaders if there are enough people to fill extra classes. All Group Leaders (including the "extras") should participate in the Leadership Training Time prior to the start of the first study.

Lamplighters materials should be ordered as soon as the Pastor has chosen the first study and has estimated the total people who will participate in the Bible study. Every student, Group Leader, and Assistant Leader will need an individual Lamplighters study manual. It is also a good idea to order a few extra studies for those who decide to participate at the last moment. It is also recommended that the church purchase at least one copy of the Lamplighters Leadership Training Manual for reference purposes. The Pastor should make announcements about the upcoming Lamplighters Bible Study from the pulpit and in the church bulletin beginning approximately one month prior to the start of the study. The announcements should include the name of the Book and the specific date that the study will begin. Three weeks prior to the first class a sign-up sheet should be placed in the lobby. The Pastor, Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders should be the first ones to indicate their participation in the ministry on the sign-up sheet. The congregation should be encouraged to sign up early so the exact number of classes can be determined and the study materials can be ordered. The Pastor, Group Leaders, and Assistant Leaders should promote the Lamplighters study within the church and to others within the community. If the Lamplighters Bible Study is scheduled to meet on Wednesday evening, the sign-up deadline for the class should be completed by the Sunday before the Orientation (first) meeting. If the Bible study meets on Sunday evenings, the final sign up should be on the previous Sunday or Wednesday. No one should be "forced" to participate in the ministry. It is better to begin with a few committed believers who are serious about their personal spiritual growth than to have many who are only mildly curious but will quickly drop out of the study within the first few weeks.

When the Lamplighters registration has been completed, the Pastor should use the sign-

up sheet to make the final selection of the Group leaders and their Assistant Leaders. The Pastor should contact all the Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders before the Orientation Meeting to confirm their leadership roles in the ministry. If there are some leaders who have participated in the Leadership Training Time but will not be needed to oversee a class at this time, they should be informed. The Pastor should now determine the individual class rosters from the sign-up sheet. He should be careful to select a mixture of mature and younger believers for each class in order to promote effective inter-personal edification. The specific class rosters do not need to be told to the Group Leaders prior to the first meeting.

### **HOW DO I DEVELOP LEADERS FOR THE LAMPLIGHTERS MINISTRY?**

There are three key leadership positions within the traditional Lamplighters ministry. The oversight of the entire ministry is the responsibility of the Pastor who will usually serve as the Ministry Leader. The second position of ministry responsibility is fulfilled by the various Group Leaders. There must be a Group Leader for each class (usually eight to ten people) of men or women. The third position of Lamplighters leadership is the responsibility of Assistant Leader. The various ministry qualifications and responsibilities are presented below.

### **WHO LEADS THE MINISTRY?**

The selection of the Ministry Leader is critical to the effective implementation and continuing success of a Lamplighters ministry. In most situations, the Senior Pastor will serve as the Ministry Leader. If another member of the pastoral staff is selected to lead the ministry, it is imperative that the Senior Pastor endorses the ministry wholeheartedly. In the situation of a multiple pastoral staff, careful consideration should be given in the selection of the best person to fulfill this important leadership responsibility. Listed below are the qualifications of an effective Ministry Leader.

1. **Qualifications:**
  - a. **Leadership skills.** The Ministry Leader should possess good leadership qualities. This includes the ability to inspire those who will be serving as Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders and the students.
  - b. **People skills.** The Ministry Leader should possess the ability to work with people in a wide variety of situations. The Ministry Leader must also work closely with the leaders and oversees the entire ministry.
  - c. **Organizational skills.** The Ministry Leader is responsible for the entire oversight of the ministry. The selection of Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders and the administration of the Lamplighters ministry require effective administrative abilities.
  - d. **Ability to Teach Effectively.** The Ministry Leader is responsible to lead the Leader's Meeting, teach during the Corporate Teaching Time and respond to questions asked during the Question and Answer Time.
2. **Preparatory Responsibilities:**

The Ministry Leader is responsible for all of the preliminary planning and organization that is essential to the effective implementation of the Lamplighters ministry into the church. The following list of duties and responsibilities are presented under the assumption that the Pastor will be assuming this

responsibility. In a situation where an assistant pastor or lay leader serves as the Ministry Leader internal administrative procedures could affect the material presented in this section. An overview of the responsibilities of the Ministry Leader is listed below:

- a. Select the first Lamplighters Bible study to be offered.
- b. Introduce the concept of personal inductive Bible study to the lay leaders and congregation.
- c. Contact Lamplighters International and inform them of the church's desire to begin a Lamplighters ministry.
- d. Order the necessary materials.
- e. Select the exact dates the classes will be meeting.
- f. Select sufficient la leaders to serve as Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders for the various classes and arrange for the Leadership Training Time.
- g. Promote the ministry within the church.
- h. Conduct official sign-up:
  - i. Arrange the class rosters and room selections.
  - ii. Weekly Responsibilities:
    - a. General oversight of the ministry including promotion, troubleshooting and other administrative duties.
    - b. Lead the Leaders' Meeting.
    - c. Teach the weekly lesson during the Congregational Teaching Time.
    - d. Answer specific questions during the Question and Answer Time.

### **WHAT DO THE GROUP LEADERS DO?**

The Group Leader is responsible for the spiritual oversight and shepherding of those class members assigned to his or her group. This includes completing the weekly Lamplighters Bible Study lesson, reviewing the Leader's Guide, leading the Group Discussion Time, and shepherding the class members throughout the duration of the study. As a shepherd, the Group Leader should do everything he can to encourage and assist the members of the class to experience a fruitful study of the Word of God.

1. Qualifications:
  - a. Have a clear testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and be an active faithful member of the church.
  - b. Be an enthusiastic advocate of the inductive method of personal Bible study and the Lamplighters ministry.
  - c. Desire to serve the Lord as a Lamplighters Group Leader.
  - d. Complete at least one semester of Lamplighters as an Assistant Leader and attend a Leadership Training Time or have completed an entire Lamplighters study and attend a Leadership Training Time.
  - e. Possess good communication skills. This is essential as diplomacy is needed to lead a discussion group effectively.
  - f. Possess good organizational skills.
  - g. Be able to attend the weekly Leader's Meeting.
2. Weekly Responsibilities
  - a. Complete the weekly lesson by the previous Sunday if the class meets on Wednesday or by Wednesday if the class meets on Sunday. This will enable

- the Group leader to alert his group members to any especially difficult questions and encourage them to begin their lessons early in the week.
- b. Review the Leader's Guide after the lesson has been completed. The Group Leader should contact the Ministry Leader if there are unresolvable discrepancies between his answers and the Leader's Guide.
  - c. Be prepared spiritually, emotionally, and physically to lead the class in a manner glorifying to God.
  - d. Follow up on all class members and offer assistance.
  - e. Pray for each member of his class personally and specifically.
  - f. Report any special problems or concerns to the Ministry Leader.

### **WHAT DO THE ASSISTANT GROUP LEADERS DO?**

1. **Qualifications**
  - a. Have a clear testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and be an active member of the church who is faithful to the regular services of the church.
  - b. Be an enthusiastic advocate of the inductive method of personal Bible study and the Lamplighters ministry.
  - c. Desire to serve the Lord as a Lamplighters Assistant Group Leader.
  - d. Possess good communication skills. This is essential as diplomacy is needed to lead a discussion group effectively.
  - e. Possess good organizational skills.
  
2. **Weekly Responsibilities:**
  - a. Be in class at least ten minutes prior to the Group Discussion Time. The Assistant Leader should set the appropriate number of chairs in a circle or around a table. He should leave a place for the latecomers near the entrance to the room to minimize disturbances after the class begins. The Group Leader will be coming from the Leaders' Meeting and will need a place where he can see a wall clock if there is one in the room. This will allow him to occasionally glance at the time rather than to glance down at his wristwatch that could be offensive to someone who is answering a question.
  - b. Be in class at least ten minutes prior to the Group Discussion Time. The Assistant Leader should set the appropriate number of chairs in a circle or around a table. He should leave a place for the latecomers near the entrance to the room to minimize disturbances after the class begins. The Group Leader will be coming from the Leaders' Meeting and will need a place where he can see a wall clock if there is one in the room. This will allow him to occasionally glance at the time rather than to glance down at his wristwatch that could be offensive to someone who is answering a question.
  - c. Help the Group Leader if the discussion gets off track by making appropriate comments to insure that the lesson is completed.
  - d. Allow the Group Leader to lead the discussion. The Assistant Leader is there to support and to be a helper.
  - e. Be willing to lead during the Group Discussion time in the event of illness or other reasons.
  - f. Follow-up and encourage the class members.
  - g. Pray for the Ministry Leader, Group Leader, and the individual class

- members.
- h. Report all concerns or problems to the Group Leader.
- i. Be a model student.

### **WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE FIRST CLASS?**

The class rosters and specific class locations should be posted conspicuously in the church lobby before the people arrive at the church. The Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders should be encouraged to be at the church early in order to set a favorable impression for the first night. The first time the Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders meet with their new classes is very important. Although the Group Leaders will not be going over a particular lesson, they have much to accomplish. Many of the people will be getting their first introduction to this type of Bible study. If they have not participated in this type of Bible study or have recently come to Christ, they will likely attend the class with a measure of apprehension or even negativism. It is the Group Leaders' responsibility to lead this first meeting with a clear and enthusiastic presentation of the benefits and details of the Lamplighters study. The Group Leaders should be sensitive to the needs of everyone in their class and realize that it will take time for some members of the class to experience the benefits of personal inductive Bible study. The Group Leaders should remember that they have already become convinced that the concept, the method of study, and the mechanics of this study are a biblical and an effective way to study the Word of God. The Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders should be prepared physically, emotionally and spiritually to make this first evening a time of encouragement.

### **HOW DO WE LEAD THE FIRST CLASS?**

A complete Leadership Manual has been prepared to provide you with the details about every aspect of the Lamplighters meetings.

### **WHAT DO WE DO THE WEEK FOLLOWING THE FIRST CLASS?**

The Group Leaders and the Assistant Leaders should call the members of their classes during the first week after the first class has met to establish contact with the individual class members. This will help the class members feel more comfortable to call the leaders if they need help with their weekly lessons and begin to establish the shepherding relationship. The class leaders should ask the individual members if they have any specific questions about the weekly lesson or upcoming study. Questions such as: "Have you had a chance to begin the study yet?" or "Are you having any difficulty with the questions?" will help the class members feel the loving support of the class leaders and give them confidence to call when they have trouble with difficult questions in the future. The Group Leader and the Assistant Leader should work together to shepherd the individual members of their class throughout the entire Lamplighters study. Some members of the class will need only an occasional call but others weekly shepherding.

### **HOW DO I HANDLE CLASS PROBLEMS SUCH AS SOMEONE TALKING TOO MUCH?**

The Lamplighters Leadership Manual addresses several kinds of class problems and offers solutions regarding the best way to address them.

### **IS IT OKAY TO USE BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES AFTER THE LESSON IS COMPLETED?**

Yes. Further research of a biblical passage in a thoroughly evangelical conservative commentary is encouraged.

### **HOW CAN A STUDENT GET THE MOST OUT OF THE LESSONS?**

The student should begin the lesson early for the following week. Some people complete their lessons at one time but others have testified that they gain more from the studies when they approach the lessons at two different times. If the group meets on Sunday evenings, the student should try to complete Part One of the lesson by Wednesday. If the Group meets on Wednesday evenings, he should try to complete Part One by Sunday. If he elects to complete the weekly lessons at one time, he should not leave the completion of the lesson until the night before the weekly class meeting. This often leaves insufficient time for thorough consideration of the important application questions.

### **SHOULD A CHURCH OFFER TWO LAMPLIGHTERS STUDIES AT THE SAME TIME?**

It is possible to offer two different classes at one time, but it is not generally recommended. Experience has shown that the Group Discussion Time, the congregational Teaching Time and the Question and Answer Time are all integral parts of the Lamplighters ministry. However, the Lamplighters ministry can be adapted to this format and various studies can be offered on an elective basis. If a church offered two or more studies at one time, the Group Discussion Time needs to be extended and the Congregational Teaching Time and Question and Answer Time need to be modified or eliminated. The individual classes who are studying a similar Book can meet together for a mini-congregational teaching time.

### **WHY DO THE MEN AND WOMEN MEET SEPARATELY?**

There is nothing inherently wrong with combining men and women into one group but experience has shown that men and women often feel more freedom to speak openly when they meet separately. Issues can affect men and women differently, giving the Group Discussion Time uniqueness for both groups.

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