



Ministers' Fraternal Study Guides

Introduction to the Study Guides

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Introduction

The Affinity Theological Team has provided this short series of Study Guides as a resource which may be helpful for ministers' fraternal. They will be added to if there is a call for more and to that end the team invites those involved in ministers' fraternal to let us know subjects that would be appropriate – and even to submit Study Guides outlines for possible distribution.

The purpose of the Study Guides is to assist the consideration which ministers' fraternal give to particular topics. The Guides offer some reliable and well-informed background briefing and outline various fruitful discussion leads and suggest further reading for those who wish to investigate the topic in more detail.

It is envisaged that members of a ministers' fraternal choosing to use one of the Study Guides would all receive a copy ahead of time in order to do a small amount of preliminary reading and thinking. At the Fraternal itself, it is likely that one member of the group would introduce the topic and we would recommend that he is given a maximum of 15 to 20 minutes to do this. This member would obviously have given a more thorough attention to the topic ahead of the meeting.

Because it is hoped that all members of a Fraternal would read the material before the meeting, the Study Guides do not exceed four sides of A4.

- They are short briefing documents, or well-informed discussion starters.
- They are first words, not last words.
- They are not intended to be definitive, authoritative, comprehensive, clever or dense.
- They are intended to be balanced, sane, relevant, comprehensible, suggestive, usable.

Ministers' Fraternal are free to photocopy these Guides for their members.

What makes a good fraternal?

Pastors are busy men and will vote with the feet if a fraternal is not useful; few will attend for long out of mere loyalty. There are a few vital ingredients for a successful fraternal:

- It must be run by the members attending and not dictated by a single 'leader'.
- It should contain time for sharing and prayer.
- Long and erudite papers by one of the brethren to impress his colleagues is a sure road to failure.
- Meetings should start on time and keep to time so that men know exactly when they will be able to return to their pastoral duties (or collect the kids from school!).
- A firm, but not dictatorial, chairman should be chosen to keep discussion on track, limit the most verbose and watch the clock. He must not himself dominate discussion.
- The issues chosen for discussion should relate to the reality of pastoral ministry and preaching. There are many conferences for lengthy historical and involved theological

debate - a ministers' fraternal need not duplicate these.

However, ministers' fraternals are ideal occasions for men to keep up to date with changing and threatening trends, and for iron to sharpen iron.

You know that a fraternal is good

- When the men regularly turn up to support it.
- When the men are comfortable with each other and there is no need either to pretend or impress.

Affinity Ministers' Fraternal Study Guides

The following Study Guides can be downloaded from the Affinity website. (www.affinity.org.uk):

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| 1. Introduction to Fraternals and Best Practice | Brian Edwards |
| 2. Identifying and Training Men for the Ministry | Paul Pease |
| 3. The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity | David Field |
| 4. The Minister's Family | Jonathan Prime |
| 5. A Guide to Matthew's Gospel | Gary Brady |
| 6. Homosexuality and our Response | Steve Wilmshurst |
| 7. Developing Expository Preaching | Rupert Bentley-Taylor |
| 8. A Guide to Zechariah | John Tindall |
| 9. The Minister's Personal Walk with the Lord | Ken McIntosh |
| 10. Interpreting the Bible (hermeneutics) | |
| 11. Work | David Field |
| 12. Evangelism in the Local Church | Graham Beynon |
| 13. Ecumenism | John Rosser |
| 14. Revelation Study Guide | Steve Wilmshurst |
| 15. How to go into prison, get out, and be welcomed back again! | Gerard Chrispin / Paul Philpott |
| 16. How to preach in prison | Gerard Chrispin |