

Brief #3



The Pray & Plan Process

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this brief is threefold:
 - 1. To familiarize you with the “Pray and Plan” process, which is the foundational approach to any CMF ministry or activity.
 - 2. To share what we believe to be a Scriptural method for determining your own ministry involvement.
 - 3. To provide you with some guidance for developing a specific CMF ministry in your area.
- B. Objectives: When you have completed this brief you will be able to:
 - 1. Develop a local “Pray and Plan” meeting.
 - 2. Plan specific CMF ministry in your area as the Lord leads you.
- C. Instructions:
 - 1. Read the entire brief thoroughly.
 - 2. If you have not already done so, begin praying for one or more prayer partners with whom you can “Pray and Plan.”
 - 3. If it will be helpful, use Appendix A, “Pray and Plan Guide,” and Appendix B, “Pray and Plan Worksheet” to help you get accustomed to the process of praying and planning. Feel free to duplicate and use these appendixes as you see fit.

NOTE: Much of this brief is adapted from “Pray and Plan” by Paul Pettijohn.

II. BASIS OF THE “PRAY AND PLAN PROCESS”

- A. Many of us are activists. All we need is for someone to run a cause up the flagpole and, sometimes without a second thought, we charge off into the dark unknown. Before long we may run headlong into a massive brick wall. As we pick ourselves up, we ask, “What happened?” How much better if we PRAY FIRST to get God's plan, and then move into action. “Pray and Plan” has been used very successfully in the planning of Christian Military Fellowship ministries in the United States and overseas.
- B. The “Pray and Plan” procedure has always been based on the following five Scriptural promises. (All of these are quoted from the NIV.)
 - 1. “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20)
 - 2. “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13)
 - 3. “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” (Romans 8:26)

4. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” (John 16:13)
 5. “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)
- C. Based on the preceding promises, we can expect our Lord to be in our midst when we gather in His name (for the purpose of doing His will as He leads and for His own glory). We can also expect the Holy Spirit to be vitally involved: helping us to pray according to God's will and leading us in the truth. And of course, God will give us the wisdom we most certainly lack apart from His gracious provision.
- D. The classic passage which provides the biblical foundation for “Pray and Plan” is found in Acts 13:1-3:
1. “In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”
 - a. At Antioch the Holy Spirit said to send out Barnabas and Saul on the first missionary journey. Instead of jumping up with excitement and rushing into action, as so many of us are prone to do, the leaders fasted and prayed some more and then laid hands on them and sent them out to proclaim the Gospel.
 - b. The real meaning of the Greek here is that they “let them go.” God sent them; the leaders simply let them go. This is confirmed in the first part of verse four (“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit...”).
 2. An important lesson we can learn from this passage is that the leaders at Antioch were ministering to the Lord and fasting. They had a vertical focus and enjoyed worshiping the Lord. This attitude allowed them to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. In numerous CMF planning sessions and business meetings we have learned the importance of worshiping God before all else. It has been a common experience in CMF, as it is in many ministries, for leaders to have different opinions regarding a common decision that needs to be made. Sometimes the number of opinions equals the number of people involved in making the

decision. But when we have taken the time to worship and enjoy the Lord, we have discovered that our separate opinions are not necessarily what God had in mind. We have seen conflicts that literally deadlocked a meeting resolved in just a few moments after a season of prayer and worship.

- b. It is in the process of worshiping, loving and communicating with God that our hearts are prepared to hear from Him without any ulterior motives or hidden agendas.

III. HOW TO START

- A. If you are alone, pray for one other person to join you in a “Pray and Plan” team. The team needs only two to begin. Invite other believers to join you. This can be a great learning experience for them, too.
- B. It is important to remember our marching orders from the Great Commission. “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18b-20)
- C. When our directions are from the Lord, they will always be consistent with His revealed will as it is contained in the Bible. Therefore, seek in your praying and planning to find ways to be an obedient disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ while encouraging and equipping others to do likewise.

IV. SIX STEPS IN THE “PRAY AND PLAN PROCESS”

A. Step 1 - WORSHIP

- 1. Focus on the God Who created you and the universe. Minister to Him with praise and adoration. Psalms 148 to 150 are filled with declarations of praise to our God. Read them aloud to one another, and they will suggest other items for which you can praise God.
- 2. To hear from the Lord, share Scripture with one another. Perhaps someone could give a devotional that was prepared beforehand. Give Him thanks, sing praise choruses or hymns. Don't be in a hurry; relax and enjoy the Lord. You might even make this the agenda for an entire meeting!

B. Step 2 - OBJECTIVES

- 1. This second step, objectives, is vital to the whole process of praying and planning. First, ask God to reveal any need(s) of the people in your locale. Then seek His guidance in

developing objectives to meet those needs. Be open to God in this process, so that He can show you needs and objectives that you may not have recognized. As you pray through this process, expect the Holy Spirit to reveal specific directions for your local CMF ministry.

2. Discuss the needs God has revealed to each one on the team and objectives for meeting them. Ask one person to record these needs and objectives.
3. Your objectives should be measurable. Any objective is measurable when it is stated in such a way that you can determine when it has been accomplished. Three illustrations of measurable objectives are:
 - a. Beginning next week, *I will pray and plan with PO2 Charlie Doe on a weekly basis.*
 - b. *We will establish a new weekly evangelistic Bible study in the NCO housing area starting next month.*
 - c. *We will begin an adult marriage and family Sunday School class at the post chapel beginning with the next quarter.*

C. Step 3 - PROGRAM

1. Program puts the objectives into time and space. Here again pray first, and then record what the Holy Spirit brings into your minds. This step involves the administrative details needed to accomplish your objectives. Things like: determining when and where to meet; securing necessary permission; selecting an appropriate topic or passage to study; deciding how to attract others; considering whether to serve refreshments; finding the right leadership; arranging for baby-sitting; getting volunteers to accomplish all the necessary tasks; and whatever else you need to do in order to fulfill your objective(s).
2. Examples of programs for the three preceding measurable objectives (IV, B, 3, a-c) might be as follows:
 - a. *Charlie and I will meet next Saturday morning at 0900 in my shop. I will provide some coffee and he will prepare a short biblical devotional on the topic of "vision." We intend to meet at the same time weekly and limit our time to 60 minutes. We will use the "Pray and Plan" format.*
 - b. MSgt Jones will coordinate with the appropriate Chaplain to get permission and support. Beginning the first of next month, we will meet for 90 minutes each Thursday from 1900-2030. We will meet at the Jones' the first month and rotate monthly to various members homes on a

voluntary basis. Host couples will provide simple, inexpensive, low calorie refreshments for after the study. Meetings will begin on time with singing led by SGT Smith. We will end promptly at 2030. To begin, we will use the Neighborhood Bible Study Booklet, "They Met Jesus" and cover one lesson per week for eight weeks. Each couple will buy their own booklet. MSG Brown will lead the first session, then leadership will rotate to volunteers. We will arrange our own baby-sitting. We covenant with each other to follow the group study guidelines contained in the booklet and to invite one non-Christian friend to attend with us.

- c. *We will study "The Christian Family" by Larry Christiansen using the published study guides. SGT Jones will contact the Religious Education Director and the Chaplains to secure permission to begin the class starting with the next quarter in the 1000 Sunday School hour at Chapel #1. When he gets permission, he will secure the room and order 20 books and study guides through the R.E. Director. Captain Smith will facilitate the classes; Mrs. Smith will prepare and submit chapel bulletin announcements for the three Sundays preceding the start of the class. Mrs. Jones will compile a class roster. At the end of the quarter we will evaluate the class using the "Pray and Plan" process to consider if we will want to continue and, if so, what curriculum we will use.*

D. STEP 4 - PRAYER SUPPORT

1. This fourth step is sometimes neglected, but it is essential to a fully victorious ministry. Ask prayer partners, friends and relatives to provide special prayer support for your program. Ask them to pray for a specific period of time, and ask for specific prayer objectives.
2. Communicate your need for prayer support to the CMF office in Englewood, Colorado. We can pray for you in our weekday devotion at the office and, if you send your requests in by the first of the month, they can be shared with the whole CMF family in the following month's "Battle Plan".
3. Your prayer supporters will be greatly encouraged if you report back to them the results of their prayers. They'll be eager to receive your next prayer request!

E. STEP 5 - EVALUATION AND THANKSGIVING

1. The fifth step is evaluation and thanksgiving. Did you really

accomplish what God wanted you to do? In the way He wanted you to? Obviously all spiritual results will not be immediately evident; however, much can be recognized. Meet to analyze what happened and to determine if any changes are needed for future programs.

2. Turn to God with grateful hearts for the way He has answered prayer. Ask those who participated, and those who helped you as prayer supporters, to join you in praise and thanksgiving to God. Recognize that you need to be thankful for lessons learned as well as the more obvious successes.
3. Examples of evaluating the three preceding programs (IV, C, 2, a-c) might be as follows:
 - a. *Our vision has increased and we discern a need for a lunch time Bible study with the Christians on our ship. We are focusing our prayer on setting objectives to meet this need. Also, when we shared our discoveries about "vision" with Chief Johnson he asked to be included in the Pray and Plan, so he will start next week. Praise the Lord!*
 - b. *The study has been going well. One couple has stopped coming because we have slipped into exceeding our time limit. We need to commit ourselves to ending precisely at 2030. The Wilson's, non-believers who have been attending at the Smith's invitation, committed their lives to Christ last week. Hallelujah! We will pray regularly for their growth and for their continued involvement with the Bible study. Also for the Brown's, who will be getting together with them for a couple-to-couple relationship. We all need to commit ourselves to praying for and inviting a non-Christian friend.*
 - c. *Sunday School is going well. Advertising in the Chapel bulletin has been sporadic. Mrs. Smith will follow-up and try to correct the problem. Next Sunday Captain Smith will ask for suggestions regarding our curriculum for the next quarter. "The Christian Family" has really prompted vigorous conversations regarding family issues. A number of folks have shared very personal family needs for our prayer. Some have shared successes in doing the suggested exercises in the study guide. Praise the Lord for this development in these families.*

F. STEP 6 - REPEAT

1. Finally, repeat the process. Use the Pray and Plan approach regularly to keep your ongoing ministry in touch with God's

desires for it. Use it also for specific events you plan, such as picnics, luncheons, conferences, etc. Pray and Plan will keep you in touch with your Supreme Commander-In-Chief.

2. Write and share with us how it works for you! Your testimony will be a great encouragement to other CMF members in the field.

V. HAVE A WOPPER! The acronym, "WOPPER", has helped some CMF members remember the "Pray and Plan" process. It is used as follows:

W orship the Lord and enjoy Him together so that

O bjectives can be set that will meet the needs He reveals, then

P rogram the necessary steps to achieve your objectives and ask others to

P ray that your objectives will be met. Once you have started,

E valuate to determine if you are doing what God desires. Be sure to

R epeat the process regularly to keep your ministry in touch with God's desires.

VI. PLEASE NOTE

A. This brief is meant as a guide to a process, not as a rule or as the only process for praying and planning. There are many circumstances in which it would be unnecessary to go through every step. For instance:

1. Your group may have already determined a need to learn how to worship together. You might therefore make worshipping God your sole activity.
2. You might be meeting to determine a program to accomplish objectives that have already been discerned by the Christians in your locale.
3. The purpose of your meeting may be to evaluate a program that is already in place.

B. The most important thing is to do everything you can to avoid the error of not seeking God's counsel, i.e., Psalms 106:13; Isaiah 31:1; Jeremiah 10:21; Zephaniah 1:6; etc.

"CALL TO ME, AND I WILL ANSWER YOU, AND SHOW YOU GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS, WHICH YOU DID NOT KNOW."
(Jeremiah 33:3)

APPENDIX A - PRAY AND PLAN GUIDE

I. WORSHIP

- A. Focus on God, minister to Him with praise and adoration.
- B. A number of groups have found the "ACTS" acronym helpful for facilitating a time of worship:

Adoration — worship and praise Him for who He is;

Confession — forsake any known sin and claim God's forgiveness;

Thanksgiving — for all that He has done, is doing and will do;

Supplication — pray for yourself (petitions) and others (intercession).

- C. We pray the following "ACTS" sample will be helpful:

- 1. **ADORATION:** Cover to cover the Bible is filled with descriptions of our Lord. The following passages are just a few inspiring examples of adoration and thanksgiving. Choose one or more, or another that you know of, and meditate on what it says. Jot down anything you discover for which you can praise and thank God. Look especially for His attributes, nature and works. This will prepare you to worship Him specifically according to His own revelation of Himself. Acknowledge your discoveries to Him, praise Him for Who He is, what He has done and will do in the future.

Exodus 15:1-18	Psalms 116:1-9
I Chronicles 29:10-13	Psalms 145-150
Psalms 9:7-12, 17-18	Daniel 2:19-23
Psalms 95:1-7	Daniel 4:34-35
Psalms 103:8-13	Luke 1:46-55, 67-79
Psalms 104:1, 5-9	Romans 3:21-26
Psalms 104:24-25, 31	Romans 5:6-11

- 2. **CONFESSION:** Meditate on the following passages and determine if there is any unconfessed sin in your life. Let the Holy Spirit reveal this to you rather than being overly introspective. Then confess (agree that it is sin) and forsake it (determine to change) and claim God's forgiveness.

Psalms 32	Proverbs 28:13
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Psalm 51:1-17
Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

I John 1:9

3. THANKSGIVING: In addition to thanking God as suggested above, thank Him specifically for everything that is happening in your life and ministry (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; I Thessalonians 5:18).
4. SUPPLICATION: Pray for others and their requests (Ephesians 6:18) as well as for yourself (Matthew 7:7-8). The following passages are a sample of the Apostle Paul's prayers for the brethren. As you read them, jot down examples of what you want others to pray for you and what you can pray for others. Maybe you can think of other prayers in the Bible that would also be helpful.

Romans 15:5-6
I Corinthians 1:10
Ephesians 1:15-23
Ephesians 3:14-19
Philippians 1:9-11

Colossians 1:9-12
I Thessalonians 4:12-13
II Thessalonians 1:11-12
II Thessalonians 2:16-17
Hebrews 13:20-21

II. OBJECTIVES

- A. Ask God to reveal needs that you could meet. Record what He brings to mind.
- B. You might want to review the CMF operating principles in Article IV of the CMF Constitution or on pp. 3-4 in the CMF Brief #1 - "Orientation." They could help you to discern some needs in your locale.
- C. Write some measurable objectives that will serve to meet the needs. You should be able to answer "Yes" to the following questions:
 1. Will these objectives contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission?
 2. Are these objectives consistent with the Word of God and therefore honoring to Him?
 3. Am I personally willing to get involved in accomplishing these objectives?
 4. Are they written in such a way that I/we can determine if they have been fulfilled?

III. PROGRAM

- A. Make specific plans concerning the "how-tos" of accomplishing your objectives, making sure you have covered all the administrative

details.

- B. Some questions you should ask and be able to answer would include:
1. Have you notified all the appropriate authorities?
 2. Do you have the support of your chaplain(s) or pastor(s)?
 3. When, where and how often will this event take place?
 4. Have the hosts, sponsors, etc. been notified and do they know exactly what is expected of them?
 5. Have the facilities been reserved and confirmed?
 6. What materials are needed (study guides, tapes, videos, music sheets, projectors, etc.)?
 7. Have provisions been made for children and/or baby-sitting?
 8. Have necessary transportation arrangements been made?
 9. How will you advertise? Have you used every available means to invite others?
 10. If you are having a guest speaker, have you made appropriate arrangements for transportation, housing and meals? Have you shared these details with the guest speaker?
 11. If there are fees or costs involved, have you determined how to get the funding? Are you sure you have or can get the resources to carry out this plan?
 12. Have you designated people to oversee and accomplish all these administrative details? Are you sure you have enough volunteers who are committed to getting the job done?

IV. PRAYER SUPPORT

- A. Share specific prayer requests with your prayer partners.
- B. Write or call the CMF Home Office for prayer support.

V. EVALUATING AND THANKSGIVING

- A. Get together to honestly evaluate how you are doing in accomplishing your objective(s)? Ask some penetrating questions like:
 1. Is God pleased with and honored by our program?
 2. Has our program really contributed to fulfilling our objective(s)?
 3. What did we do right? Praise the Lord! What did we do wrong? Thank Him for lessons learned.
 4. Where can we improve?
 5. How is our program contributing to encouraging and equipping the saints to be obedient disciples of Jesus Christ and/or serving to reach others with the Gospel?
- B. Make changes and adjustments where necessary.
- C. Be sure to share reports with your prayer partners and the Home Office.

- VI. REPEAT - Pray and Plan on a regular basis to help you stay in touch with your Supreme Commander-In-Chief and to be sure you are doing His work, His way, for His glory so you can have His blessing.

ENJOY YOUR WOPPER!

APPENDIX B - PRAY AND PLAN WORKSHEET

You can use this worksheet to make notes during your session(s). Feel free to duplicate this form.

NEEDS:

OBJECTIVE(S): (Are they measurable? Will they meet the needs?)

PROGRAM: (Have you covered all the details?)

PRAYER SUPPORT:

EVALUATION: