

## **FOCUS KENYA BIBLE EXPOSITION SELF TRAINING PROGRAM (BEST-P)**

### **What Is BEST-P?**

"BEST-P" is an acronym for Bible Exposition Self - Training Program. It is a long-term group oriented training program on Bible study and expository preaching skills.

### **Origin of BEST-P**

The first BEST-P group was formed after Ezra '89 (The FOCUS Annual Bible and Leadership Training Conference) when some of the delegates felt that they wanted to put into practice what they had learnt during the conference. The group was meant to help the members become good Bible expositors through a self-training program. It was to provide the necessary challenge to help each other to be better Bible students and to prepare adequately before they presented their expositions. The rest would then evaluate the presenter in order to help them improve during their future presentations. BEST-P groups have since continued to increase in number with several FOCUS groups having them within the campus.

### **The BEST-P Concept**

The Bible Exposition Self-Training Program focuses on skills of bible study, bible exposition and the preparation of bible study guides. The group is initially trained on inductive bible study, principles of bible interpretation and the art of sermon preparation and presentation.

The group will then decide on the book(s), passages or themes of the bible to be studied. Each participant will be assigned a study unit. In their personal study, the participants will do a thorough study in which they seek to apply the skills learnt and then organize the study materials into a sermon. After this, every participant will do a presentation with the rest of the group members forming the audience. The group will evaluate the work focusing on the interpretation of the text, the flow and content of the sermon and the manner of presentation. They will make their contributions and comments which the presenter will consider in his final write-up and future presentations. Since evaluation is a key aspect of this training, the group will use a detailed evaluation form.

### **General Objectives of BEST-P**

Through this training, the aim is that the participants will become passionately committed to Scripture through:

- diligent, consistent and thorough study
- faithful application in their own lives
- faithful and effective preaching

### **The Curriculum of BEST-P**

The groups ideally have five to seven members. This enhances participation during group meetings and allows each group member to do a presentation in quick succession (see appendix 1 for a sample schedule). If there are many people interested in being members of BEST-P in one campus they can be sub-divided into several smaller groups.

Four main activities should be highlighted:

#### **a. Training**

Soon after its formation, or on receiving new members, the BEST-P group focuses on training the members in the skills of Bible study and preaching. The least training that any BEST-P member should receive before engaging in presentations must include hermeneutics, inductive Bible study, expository preaching and homiletics. These provide the members with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for engaging in the other BEST-P activities.

## **b. Presentations**

After each member is given an area to study and present on, they do thorough preparations for each presentation as they have been trained. The presenter is encouraged to take this process seriously and engage the study first for personal edification and then for sharing with others.

## **c. Evaluation**

During the presentations, members listen to those presenting and then comment with a view to helping the presenter improve. Areas covered in the evaluation process include:

- hermeneutical accuracy: this is an extremely important part of the sermon evaluation;
- relevance/ faithfulness to the topic if one was provided;
- the delivery of the sermon.

A more comprehensive evaluation guide is provided in a manual (see appendix 2).

Major hermeneutical discrepancies that may arise in the process of the presentations should not be ignored, but must be engaged with thoroughly, either at the time or in a further presentation or open discussion forum.

## **d. Reflections, Discussions and Open Debates**

Having developed the discipline of thorough study, BEST-P members naturally develop interest in engaging with doctrinal issues and other issues considered as either difficult or controversial, with the aim of establishing truth.

Whereas the development of reflective thinking on such issues is the responsibility of every individual member, the group once in a while plans for discussions around a particular issue, whether it be contemporary or doctrinal. All members are asked to study and reflect on the issue, while one or two are asked to prepare presentations on it. Other members will then listen and then engage them and one another in informed discussions and/or debate. Where there is more than one view on a particular matter, the discussions should be moderated with the aim of reaching a truth consensus. Where consensus is not reached, the group should isolate the contentious points for further study, reflections or seeking of help while celebrating the agreed truths. The main thing in all this is to learn from Scripture while sharpening the ability and commitment of members to dig into the Bible for truth.

## **e. Writing Bible Study Guides**

This is another area in which BEST-P members hone their skills while also using them to serve others. Through discussions with the FOCUS staff, the group can identify an area of need in which no Bible study material has been developed and then purpose to write one, with the training and guidance of the staff. Most FOCUS bible study guides have been written by BEST-P groups.

### **Note:**

Two pitfalls that members must avoid are:

- The temptation to be over-critical. The primary purpose of BEST-P is to help us "improve our serve" and not to equip us to look for other people's mistakes. We seek to find out, like the Bereans (Acts 17:11), if what is being said to us is from Scripture or not. If we have to correct others, let us do it with gentleness and respect (1 Pet 3:15).
- The danger of reducing the program to a purely academic exercise. We should rather allow God to use these groups to build up their members. We should aim for our expositions to have a word in season to minister to the listeners and to inspire hope among those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

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## APPENDIX 1: Sample Schedule for BEST-P Meetings through an Academic Year

### Semester 1

Week 1	2-hr training on Hermeneutics
Week 2	6-hr training on inductive Bible study – possibly a weekend
Week 3	2-hr training on Expository Preaching and Homiletics
Week 4	Meet to find out what each group member will present. They could choose a book or character in the Bible to do an exposition on. If there are many members, divide them into groups of 6-8 members.
Week 5	First presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 6	Second presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 7	Third presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 8	Discussion: Is genetic engineering good or evil? / What does the Bible say concerning eschatology?

### Semester 2

Week 1	2-hour Training Session on Apologetics
Week 2	Fourth presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 3	Fifth presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 4	Sixth presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 5	Seek for an opportunity as a group to do expositions/ have an apologetic discussion in an organised forum within your college, in a camp, school, church, other campus etc.
Week 6	Seventh presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 7	Eighth presentation in each group to last 30 min and then have 20 min for evaluation and discussion.  Invite a FOCUS Staff to listen and participate in the evaluation.
Week 8	Have an evaluation meeting to see how well you have performed as a BEST-P group.

## **APPENDIX 2: BEST-P SERMON EVALUATION SHEET**

The following evaluation sheet can be used to evaluate those who are doing a presentation. It will provide an equal ground for each person as the questions given will make it easier to evaluate in a more structured way.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Does it grab your attention?
- Does it touch some need or burning issue?
- Does it spell out the main theme?
- Is the right length?
- And does it lead naturally to the main passage of Scripture?

### **2. BODY OR MAIN STRUCTURE OF SERMON**

- Is the overall structure clear?
- What are the main points?
- Do they relate to the central theme?
- Are the transitions clear? Do they have adequate summaries?
- Is there a logical and progressive development?

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- Does the sermon build to a climax?
- Are there effective appeals or practical suggestions?

### **4. ANALYSIS OF CONTENT**

- Is the subject relevant and significant?
- Is the preacher faithful to the subject if one was given or stated by him/her?
- Is the sermon built on sound exegesis?
- Does the preacher show you where you are in the text?
- Does he engage you in a dialogue with the text or ideas from it?

### **5. SUPPORT MATERIALS**

- If other passages of Scripture are cited or expounded, do they throw light on the passage expounded?
- Is supporting material, e.g. quotations, illustrations and personal sharing, logically related to their points?
- Is it interesting? Varied? Specific? Sufficient?

### **6. ANALYSIS OF STYLE**

- Is the preacher's vocabulary concrete, vivid, varied?
- Are words and phrases used correctly?
- Is it grammatically correct?

### **7. TIME**

- Has time been well allocated to the various sections in a balanced way?
- Did the preacher end the sermon on time, according to the time allocated?