

Military Christian Values Series



In this series we discover that the Australian Defence Force Values are as timeless as the Bible and a guide for Christian living. Adherence to the Defence Values is something expected of all members of the ADF and Department of Defence. Professionalism, Integrity, Courage, Loyalty, Teamwork, and Innovation are core characteristics of the culture of the ADF. It should come as no surprise to anyone that these values are also inherently Christian values. This series is based upon articles written by senior ADF officers and clergy and originally appeared in Crossfire, MCF's magazine. They explain why these six biblical values are not only important to our military life but essential to our Christian walk. MCF groups are encouraged to use the six essays as topics for study and discussion during meetings and study groups.

Let us ask ourselves the following:

- Do we show God's glory through adherence to these values? If so, how best do we do so?
- Are there any aspects to these values that are contrary to our beliefs? How do we deal with that?
- What do we do when Christian co-workers and friends are not showcasing these values?
- What are the core values of Christian life not encompassed by the Defence Values? What can we do to reinforce these within our workplace?

Teamwork, by Chaplain Eric Burton, CSC, RAN

I was on a Navy course some years ago and the group leader broke us up into two's and asked the pair to face each other and grip hands. The object of the exercise he told us was to pull the other person's hands towards themselves so that their hands touched the opposite number's chest and then count the number of times they could do that. We had a minute to complete the exercise. At the command 'go' about 95% of the group engaged in **competition** with their partner trying hard to pull their hands toward them. However one pair engaged in **cooperation** in a kind of push pull action. When the time of reckoning came that pair were the clear winners with about 50 touches compared to those in competition with each other who only managed 3 or 4. This simple exercise showed me how natural for us to see life as competition - the survival of the fittest - rather than as a co-operative effort. Teamwork in Defence is essential to the success of any operation - and I guess if it came naturally we would not have

to have it drummed into us. The thrust of biblical teaching is towards community rather than individuality, working together, rather than going alone – this takes place at many levels. Let's have a look at a couple examples from the bible and then mention briefly how that can work out in our lives.

The Trinity. There is a kind of cooperation within God. We worship one God not three however the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each have complementary roles for our sake. The Lord's prayer found in Matthew 6:9-15 is a great example of this.

- The petition 'Give us today our daily bread' is taking care of our **present**. It is the Father from whom all good gifts come and who is the provider (James 1:17)
- The petition 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others' is taking care of our **past**; and this is the work of Jesus on the cross in taking the burden of our past misdeeds and omissions means that we can be free from the pain of regret and judgement (John 3:16)
- The petition 'Lead us not into temptation' takes care of our **future**. It is the Holy Spirit who provides this service for us and is active in leading and guiding us. In fact in one part of the bible He is called the counsellor (John 14:25)

So you can see that our past, present and future needs are taken care of by the teamwork within God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and this can be a real model for us to follow - for it is hard for us to accomplish much on our own.

Body Life. Find a nice quiet spot sometime soon and read Romans 12. You will see from the passage that we have been given different gifts and abilities and God's plan is that we work together to accomplish God's will. Like a human body each part has its place to play and must be present to be effective. There is something in us that makes us pull back from full engagement with others apart from family and close friends. Sometimes we do this out of a desire to protect ourselves from being hurt. God's will however is for us to engage fully and sometimes bear the pain of involvement with people who are different. So let your gift shine at work and other places, give yourself fully, and you will know that you are pleasing God as well as contributing to society.

How does this work itself out in every day life:

- Teamwork with God - I don't know if you have ever thought of a relationship with God as being part of a team. Some years ago I read about the pastor of a large Korean church called Yonggi Cho; he viewed God as a senior partner and would discuss all matters with him. It's probably best not to be seen muttering to yourselves in the OR's club or messdeck; however a constant dialogue with the living God in expectation of guidance is not as crazy as it might seem to some and can be the foundation element in your life. Jesus would often withdraw at critical times of his life (for example just before the choosing of his disciples) to dialogue with his 'senior partner' (Luke 6:12-16)
- Teamwork with your partner – For those who are married remember, if you are having difficulties - *Attack the problem not each other*. Remember you are a

team, a partnership, and treating each other with great respect as made in the image of God is a good starting point. (Ephesians 5)

- Teamwork at Work - We have already talked briefly about the fundamental need to be part of a team in Defence. It is easy to part of team when you are like-minded or part of squadron, ship, or regiment. When I get on a Qantas plane I see the sign 'one world' logo which represents other airlines that Qantas is in partnership with. We too are part of 'one world' created by God. Remember, God saw **all** that he had made and saw it was good (Genesis 1: 31). With this attitude we can resist the temptation to think that our family, group, church, service, or country is the only one that matters.

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