

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?

Professionalism, by RADM Trevor Ruting, AM, CSC, RAN

One of the core Defence values is that of professionalism. In our ADF roles this may be exhibited by our demonstrated competence in our particular specialisation, our mastery of our trade or profession, being a proficient exponent of our skills, and doing our assigned job or tasks to the best of our ability.

But this value or trait is one that stems from the Word of our Lord: one that our Lord requires of us as good followers of his teachings, as Paul wrote to Timothy:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be **proficient**, equipped for every good work.” 2 Tim 3:15-17

While our Lord also wants us to obey our authorised rulers (1 Pet 2:13-15) he wants us to set a good example to our fellow members of the ADF “for it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men”. One of the best ways of setting that good example is to be proficient practitioners of our particular Defence trade/profession: to continue to learn and to demonstrate the skills He has given us for our Defence roles; to try our hardest at all times. For all in leadership positions, this also means being firm but fair

with our subordinates - coaching and encouraging them to increase their skills and competence.

A good example from the Old Testament of a leader who clearly demonstrated his professionalism as an example to the many living in Jerusalem at that time was Nehemiah. Having convinced his king to let him rebuild the walls and gates surrounding Jerusalem, he encouraged all the families living near the gates and wall to contribute by working on the section nearest them. The surrounding foes of Tobiah, Sanballat and Geshem tried to intimidate the Jews during the rebuilding by ridicule, anger and discouragement. But Nehemiah met each challenge through prayer to our Lord and through vigilance. Each man worked on the walls with his weapon in one hand or at his side, and Nehemiah encouraged the people to "Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes." (Neh 4:14) After the re-building of the wall, Nehemiah set about restoring a proper order in society including banning the nobles from exacting taxes from their brethren. Even after he was appointed Governor of Judah he chose not to accept many of the 'spoils' previous Governors had extracted from the people as he feared the Lord. When advised to hide in the temple because his enemies were coming for him, he refused, demonstrating courage in the face of adversity.

There are very many other examples in our Lord's Word of people who clearly demonstrated the value of professionalism in the way they served their God. Romans Chapters 12 and 13 provide good advice on using your skills as do many of Paul's letters (especially Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians): whatever your talents and employment, do it professionally to help your brothers and sisters as well as to serve our Lord through our work for our masters.

I leave you with Paul's words to Timothy:

"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer." 2 Tim 2:3-4.

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