

Reigniting Our Passion

For local Groups

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV



Have you lost your passion to study the Bible? Is your life so busy that you never have time to study the Word of God? You are not alone. According to a recent study, only 9% of Americans read their Bible every day. I would imagine that even fewer regularly study what they are reading. The Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International (FCFIInternational) wants to reignite your passion for Bible studies in local groups. Learn how to please God in the department He has called you to.

“Knowing where you came from helps to keep you focused on where you are going.”

Back in the early days, members of the Fellowship of Christian firefighters met for Bible study. Duncan Wilkie had recently hit rock bottom in his life, and someone shared Christ with him. Beginning his new life in Christ, he met up with Bob Crum, another Denver, Colorado firefighter. John Barker also joined the small team and brought his God-given talent of administration to the group. Together they began to regularly meet to study the Bible and grow in their faith. What happened next, only God could accomplish.

Out of those small Bible studies, the Fellowship of Christian Firefighters (FCFIInternational) was born. Almost overnight, local groups were popping up all over the country. In state after state, firefighters were meeting together to study the Word of God and grow in their faith. The founders of FCFIInternational had no idea that God would bless their little time together in such a mighty way. Only God could achieve this kind of success in the fire service, and He is not finished with our ministry yet.



“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Matthew 18:20 NKJV

Small group ministry is at the heart of the Gospel

“Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.”

Matthew 5:1-2 NIV

Yes, Jesus taught the multitudes. As we read through the Gospels, we see times when Jesus taught to large crowds. There was the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew 14, the crowd gathered by the lake in Mark 4, and the crowd that gathered when Jesus came down from the mountain in Matthew chapter 8. While it is nice to have large audiences to speak to, it is in the small groups where the real work is completed.



Spending time with people and pouring His life into theirs was a big part of the ministry of Jesus. Walking by the way or sitting down to eat a meal was an

excellent time to talk about the things of God. Throughout scripture we see Jesus teaching truth to small groups of people, sometimes as few as two other disciples. These small quiet times, without the distractions of life, were perfect for reinforcing Biblical principles that Jesus had showed them. Questions could be raised, and minds changed as they processed what they saw and heard from the Master.



Numbers never matter to God, but changed lives do.

Many firefighters and first responders start a local group for FCFInternational in hopes of changing the fire service for good. We see a lot of bad things in our departments and who wouldn't want people to know of God's plan for firefighters? Typically, local groups start off strong as people come to see what this new thing is all about. Like the crowds in Jesus day, many come out initially to have some food or hear someone speak. But eventually, the crowds subside and the leaders of the group give up and quit.

Reigniting our passion for local groups takes commitment. Someone who is willing to go the distance no matter what the numbers are. We wouldn't think of not putting water on a fire with only limited resources, why should we do any less for God. It shouldn't matter if only one other person shows up to your event. The two of you can study the word of God together and mature in your faith. *"For*

where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. (Matthew 18:20 NIV)"

It is time that we regain our focus and zeal for Bible study in FCFInternational. While fellowshiping with other believers is important, I believe the greater blessing is in reading and studying the Word of God together. FCFInternational's Tailboard Talk Groups (TBTG) are a perfect way to start a Bible study in your station. Simply round up a couple of other firefighters and first responders, grab one of the studies from the website and begin to grow. You don't have to be a scholar to start a TBTG; you only need a desire to obey what God has said in His word.

What's your priorities?

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:33 ESV

When Christian firefighters or first responders are approached to start a local group, the number one reason they turn it down is time. Folks today are busy, and firefighters are no exception. Family commitments, church, and work requirements are some of the biggest reasons for non-involvement in our ministry. While these reasons are good, some people have become overcommitted and not much good to God. Our prayer is that firefighters and first responders would evaluate their lives and ensure that God is honored in everything we say and do.

Keith Helms, retired battalion chief for the Charlotte Fire Department, puts it this way; "The priority list should be God first, God in our family second, God in our work next, and then self." Wisdom would tell us to cut out activities that take away from our service to God, rendering us ineffective. The fire service is a vast mission field that needs dedicated individuals who are ready to spread the Gospel message and train others in their faith. *"Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few (Matthew 9:37 ESV)." If not you, then who?*

Intentional Outreach

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Isaiah 52:7 ESV

If you want to get anything done, you must be intentional

Firefighters and first responders understand this point. Fires just don't put themselves out, and patients don't heal on their own. We received a call, responded to the incident, and mitigated the situation. The fire service regularly accomplishes this task hundreds of thousands of times each year. We train for emergencies, prepare for them, and intentionally fix the problem. So why don't we do this in our ministry to firefighters and first responders?

Local groups are designed to glorify God in the fire service. The founders of FCFInternational wrote that thought into all their early documents. If we want to glorify God in the fire service, we must be intentional about our outreach.

Look at that verse from Isaiah again. Notice how the prophet uses action words to stir up our emotions to do something. People won't naturally come to us; we must go after them. Remember, where they spend eternity rests on their choices. Our local groups should be a place where the Gospel is preached, and believers can mature in their faith.

Check out our vision statement; “To glorify God in the fire service by building relationships that turn first responder's hearts and minds toward Christ (Philippians 2:11), equipping them to serve Him (Ephesians 4:12).” Building relationships takes time and effort. It must be intentional, and it begins at the station God has called you to. After the relationship has begun and the Gospel message has been shared, the equipping can begin. We believe that this is accomplished through regular Bible studies and discipleship.



“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

Romans 10:14 NIV



A Call to Action

The fire service in America has approximately 1.4 million firefighters, the majority of which have never heard the Gospel message. We are praying that God would send faithful believers to our ministry for starting a local group. Our prayer is that we would have a group in every state. But we can't do it alone. We need like-minded believers to start local groups. For those localities that have local chapters that are inactive, we are hoping that you reignite your passion for Bible study.

Our website contains a library of Bible studies ready to be used. These studies are designed by firefighters and first responders, for firefighters and first responders. They speak to the heart of the fire service while teaching Biblical truths. The goal of our ministry is to have our local groups regularly studying the Word of God. Do you have what it takes to lead others in a Bible study? Contact the International Office to learn how to begin.

www.fellowshipofchristianfirefighters.org

The APP – Christian Firefighter Hub