



Acknowledgments

Twenty years ago I was thrown into the deep end. ‘Orlando, you can lead a Bible-study group, can’t you?’ asked my Christian Union leader. It was framed as a question, but he didn’t wait for a response. ‘Thought so. That settles it. You and John can take one on.’ And so we did – in a fashion! The truth is, though, that I had never even been a member of a Bible-study group, let alone led one! Like many before and since, I had to learn on the job. Twenty years later, I’m still feeling my way.

I’ve had help, though. Over that time, I’ve read books on the subject, listened in on talks and seminars, browsed articles, discussed with experienced leaders – anything that would help me do a better job. All kinds of nuggets from all these sources have lodged themselves inside me; I dare not attempt to unpick the knot of different influences. I am unashamed to stand on the shoulders of others in this way and to acknowledge my indebtedness in this general way. That disclaimer aside, I’ve listed a few of the books I’ve found particularly helpful in Appendix 3. You might like to dig out one or two of them if you want to explore deeper.





IRON SHARPENS IRON

The contents of this book began their life in a series of training seminars I gave to the 'Knowing God' leaders at Dundonald Church in Wimbledon almost 10 years ago. I'm grateful to Richard Coekin, Senior Pastor of that church and of the Co-mission network, for allowing me the time to put the work in; and to my fellow leaders of Cranleigh Baptist Church for the time to expand these to their present form more recently. Each time I've presented the material – or parts of it – the questions and comments 'from the floor' have stimulated me to expand on specific areas – particularly the contributions of delegates at a South East Gospel Partnership training day I was invited to lead four years ago. I have also had good steers along the way from some who have been kind enough to read through the text as a whole, notably Emma Hunter Dunn, Mike Gilbart Smith and Joy Horn.

Their contributions have been invaluable.



Inevitably I must also thank my wife Libby. Not only has she contributed from her own experience of leading women's Bible-study groups, passed helpful material in my direction and made any number of suggestions along the way for areas which needed work; she has also uncomplainingly borne the brunt of my occasional periods of 'hibernation' as I've disappeared into my study or further afield to Oak Hill College library or Waverley Abbey, in search of the sustained peace and quiet needed for tapping out the text that follows.

Thank you all. And most of all thank you, my great God. May this book serve in some tiny way to increase the knowledge of your Word, and thereby of your Son and my precious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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