



# OPEN HOUSE STARTER PACK



3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION 2010

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the 'Open House Starter Pack'.

Whether you are new to the faith or were a veteran of your university Christian Union, meeting together is a vital part of our Christian discipleship, needed so much as junior doctors called to be 'Christ-like' in a 'Christ-hostile', secular world inside and outside the workplace.

We hope that you will find this a useful source of information, encouragement and resources as we work together to ensure that we are all able to find, join or even establish junior doctor fellowship groups around the UK.

The pack is very much an ongoing, evolving project and we would be delighted to receive your contributions that will help enrich the time spent together or practical lessons learnt along the way that you may want to share to help others establish or maintain a group.

Look forward to hearing from you.

The Junior Doctors Committee of CMF – January 2010

*"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Hebrews 10:23-25

# AIMS

The aims of Open House Groups are identical to those of Christian Medical Fellowship (CMF) which are:

## **UNITE....**

Christian doctors and medical students in Christ, and to encourage them to deepen their faith, live like Christ and serve Him obediently, particularly through acting competently and with compassion in their medical practice.

## **ENCOURAGE....**

Christian doctors and medical students to be witnesses for Christ amongst those they meet.

## **MOBILISE AND SUPPORT...**

All Christian doctors, medical students and other healthcare professionals serve Christ throughout the world.

## **PROMOTE...**

Christian values, especially in bioethics and healthcare, amongst doctors and medical students, in both the church and society.

# OBJECTIVES

Open House has great scope to accomplish many important objectives, some of which are listed below:

- Provide fellowship, encouragement, challenge and mutual support
- Consider issues and challenges specific to Christians in medicine
- To augment the national CMF Pastoral Care scheme
- Opportunity for evangelism amongst colleagues
- Consider the opportunities of medical mission

This is not an exhaustive list, however it is important to mention at this point the Open House is NOT an alternative to church or bible study / cell groups.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

Open house is 'open' to everyone:

- Junior doctors
- Medical students – particularly during clinical attachments
- Senior Colleagues
- Other health professionals
- Spouses – medical / non-medical
- Non-Christian Colleagues

# GETTING STARTED

## 1. Finding a group near you

This can be done through the CMF website:

<http://www.cmf.org.uk/doctors/juniors.asp>

These groups are listed in regions, and are regularly updated.

## 2. Starting a group near you

If there is no Open House group near you and you would like establish a group then we would be more than happy to help support you with this. Send us the details about your plans and what you need help with ([juniors@cmf.org.uk](mailto:juniors@cmf.org.uk)). Once established, we will put your group on the database so that others new to the region will be able to find you.

See the appendix for ideas for topics for discussion.

# PRACTICAL TIPS

## **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION...**

Most Open House groups meet regularly in the same person's home. Sometimes this has meant someone being prepared to give their house keys to someone else in the group allowing continuity of venue even if the homeowner is away or on call.

It is important that the venue is a **CENTRAL** and **ACCESSIBLE** as possible.

## **PLANNING A SCHEDULE**

Changing shift patterns and on-call rotas can make it difficult to plan regular meetings even at the best of times.

Most groups have chosen a regular time to meet attempting to avoid the days on which local churches run their bible study/small groups.

The most popular frequency of meetings have been once or twice a month. Prayerfully decide what is realistically sustainable for your group.

## **CONTENT OF MEETING**

Most groups run for 2 hours from 8pm to 10pm. The general format is:

30 minutes: Coffee/Tea, Cakes and Chat

40 minutes: Discussion / Talk

20 minutes: Prayer

30 minutes: More Coffee/Tea, cakes and chat

## **PUBLICITY**

Advertise the group as widely as possible – in local hospitals, doctor's messes, postgraduate centres, the medical school, churches, via local CMF mail shots and through established local Christian medics.

Probably the most important way of reaching colleagues is through existing members of the group inviting Christians they meet at their own places of work.

It is a good idea to find out who the local Christian doctors in your area are and invite them personally by letter, email, text or phone. CMF can help with this.

## **REMINDERS**

Remind people a week before the next meeting. You can do this by bleeping people at work, texting or emailing. Some groups are using group email forums.

## **TAKING CHARGE**

It is important to stress that Open House should be run by all for all. It doesn't work if only a few are seen to be 'actively' involved. However, there are organisational issues and it helps to have 3 or 4 people committed to putting it all together as a TEAM. It's easy to become unfocused and demoralised if you're on your own making all the effort.

Do also link in with the local CMF committee and the CMF Junior Doctors' committee (let us know you exist – [juniors@cmf.org.uk](mailto:juniors@cmf.org.uk)).

Support from local senior Christian colleagues has helped many groups thrive, with the Juniors group being just a part of what CMF does in that locality.

# APPENDIX

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Many of the Open House groups have had some great discussions relevant to the issues that Christian Doctors face at work. These have varied between ethical dilemmas, maintaining personal faith, evangelism of patients and colleagues, and work attitudes.

Ideas for topics collated from the different groups include:

### **Ethical dilemmas**

“Do not resuscitate” decisions

Euthanasia

The Cloning Debate

Palliative care / end of life ethics

Christians in research

Research ethics in the Third World

BMJ articles

The new Mental Health Act: 'Health care or social control'

Ethical Issues from the beginning – Neonatal Care

The Challenge of Homelessness – Here!

Crisis Pregnancy – a Christian response

Gas and Tubes – Dilemmas in Anesthesia and Intensive Care

Withdrawing food and fluids

Family breakdown

Ethical finger on the pulse (any topical ethical issue)

Contraception/ Morning after Pill requests – ethics in practice

Drug Reps – Heavenly Humus or Salad of Satan?

### **Personal faith issues**

Maintaining spiritual vitality

Finding God in the Fast-Lane

God's guidance/career decisions

Issues for the spouses/ families of medics

Surviving housejobs

Suffering – your privileged role!



Where is God in Suffering?

Decisions – career, city, country, the choices are just starting

Survive or Thrive – clinical students evening

By Train, Boat or Plane – opportunities overseas

Healing miracles

Medical mission abroad

Life outside work?

God centred-medicine

Risk Assessment: Spiritual Hazards as a Doctor

Are you too busy for God?

## **Work attitudes**

Surviving housejobs

Living life as a Junior Doctor - enjoying your life / maintaining your integrity

The plus side of being a doctor

Stress and cynicism at work - being a realist

Money, power, sex - how to enjoy them

Surviving on the front line

Being a Christian in the Multi-Disciplinary Team

Issues related to working in the NHS

Compassion fatigue

Where am I going? – Career Planning

The consultants: 'Sacrificing the welfare of those we love for the welfare of strangers'

The politics of working in the NHS

Spiritual Aspects of Patient Care

Redesigning health care: 'Spending time with patients is a highly effective way to improve patient care'

Is Christian Caring Different?

The Clock, our master or our servant? – Time management

Healing miracles

Life outside work?

Whole person medicine

Faith @ work

Reading journal papers and critiquing as a Christian

Spirituality and clinical care (BMJ December 2002 Vol: 325: page 1434)

God centred-medicine

Understanding HIV / AIDS

Bullying/ Dealing with dangerous/ unethical colleagues

## **Evangelism**

Witness on the wards

The Saline Solution Course

Spiritual Aspects of Patient Care

Sharing Christ with patients

Sharing faith with patients from other faiths

Faith @ work evangelistic events

“Socials”

In Birmingham, two events were arranged to prepare and enable the final year students to face life on the wards. Both of these took the form of facilitated discussions under the title of “Surviving Housejobs”.

The first of these was aimed at Christian final year medical students and focused on equipping and enabling those present to survive the housejob year from both a spiritual and professional perspective. The topics discussed by a group of final year medical students and current junior doctors included the 6 following areas:

### **1. Maintaining your relationship with God**

a) Personal walk – prayer / Bible study / discipline

b) "Corporate" walk - importance of fellowship – church / bible study / discipleship / 1 on 1 / peer group support / med school friendships

### **2. Dealing with temptation / maintaining holiness**

a) Vulnerability factors – tiredness / lack of fellowship / lack of relationship with God / sin

b) Recognising when / where / which areas personally vulnerable e.g. relationships / sex, money, lifestyle, alcohol

### **3. Ward witness (is medicine ministry?)**

a) Maintaining distinctiveness on the wards

b) Nurturing a passion for the gospel

c) Taking / making opportunities to share Christ with patients / colleagues

### **4. Money matters – stewardship / tithing issues**

### **5. Career - issues of guidance / direction**

### **6. Any other issues**