

## MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST

### MEETINGS IN MFC

Membership in MFC involves various kinds of meetings: household meetings, service meetings, prayer assemblies, teaching courses, congresses, fellowships, celebrations, etc. MFC, together with involvement in the parish, is able to provide a full Christian life through all these activities. MFC looks to its members becoming fully involved in the life and mission of the community, but is also aware of a member's other activities outside MFC. While MFC looks to forming its members so that more and more they live their lives within the context of the community, they are free to decide on the extent of their involvement, so long as such does not fall short of their basic covenant commitment.

When a person first joins MFC after the CLS, the commitment is for a weekly meeting, as part of a household, one of which every MFC member belongs to. Of the 4 weekly meetings, one is a monthly prayer assembly of the chapter, which the whole household joins. A teaching night (perhaps monthly) can also be mounted by the chapter, which then is in lieu of individual household meetings. When the member starts to serve as a pastoral leader (that is, in charge of a household), other meetings are added. He/she becomes part of an *upper* household, where he/she *receives* care and support, while handling a *lower* household, where he/she *gives* care and support. As the member moves up the pastoral leadership ladder, the mix of meetings can change further.

#### Pattern of regular meetings

Following are the monthly meetings that happen on a continuing basis (year in and year out).<sup>1</sup>

Member	Support	3 HMs + 1 PA = 4 per month
Household Servant	Service	3 lower HMs
	Support	3 upper HMs + 1 PA = 7 per month <sup>2</sup>
Unit Servant	Service	3 lower HMs + 1 V <sup>3</sup>
	Support	3 upper HMs + 1 PA = 8 per month <sup>4</sup>
Chapter Servant	Service	3 lower HMs + 1 PA
	Support	2 upper HMs + 1 SA = 7 per month

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<sup>1</sup> With possible breaks for Holy Week and the Christmas season.

<sup>2</sup> If there is a chapter teaching night in lieu of the individual household meetings, then this goes down to 6 meetings a month.

<sup>3</sup> This visitation can be done in the home of the household host immediately prior to the household meeting. If so, then there is no extra meeting day needed.

<sup>4</sup> If there is a chapter teaching night and the visitation is done on a household meeting day, then this goes down to 6 meetings a month.

Legend: HM = Household meeting  
 PA = Prayer assembly of the chapter  
 V = Visitation  
 SA = Seniors Assembly

### Service meetings

In addition, a pastoral leader has a service meeting with those other leaders under him/her. This is usually done once a month.

1. A Unit Servant meets with his/her household leaders.
  - \* This service meeting may be held during the time of fellowship at one of their regular household meetings within the month, thus avoiding an extra outing.
2. A Chapter Servant meets with his/her Unit Servants.
  - \* Normally this is a meeting separate from the regular household meetings.
  - \* For couples, normally only the men need to meet. The wives may be asked to attend when necessary.

### Leaders training

In addition to the above meetings, *new* leaders at the various levels have their training as follows:

Household leaders -- Household Leaders Training (HLT), once a month for 12 months.

Unit leaders -- Unit Leaders Training (ULT), once a month for 12 months.

Chapter leaders -- Chapter Leaders Training (CLT), once a month for 9 months.

### Other activities

Further, leaders may have other activities or service, as follows:

1. Giving talks.
2. Looking in on CLSs.
3. Other service meetings (e.g., for the Sections).
4. One-to-one meetings or counselling.
5. Visitations.
6. Attendance at Section activities.
7. Fellowship activities.
8. Special events.
9. Serving in the parish.

### Easing the burden

It is possible for MFC leaders to fit in all the above into their regular pattern of life without neglecting the other important aspects of their life, such as family and work, as they make a decision that serving the Lord in and through MFC is their calling and as they make the corresponding commitment to live their life as such. However, different leaders are in different situations, and some may find the pace of life and service in MFC to be intense and at times a burden on one's time and energy. As such, there are ways of easing the burden, without becoming remiss in the responsibilities of leadership in MFC.

Following are important principles:

1. We do not have to accept all or even most requests to give talks. It is perfectly all right to say no, and in fact this at times would be the prudent thing to do.
2. Seniors<sup>5</sup> do not need to be present at all or even most CLS sessions. There is already a complete team to do the job, and oversight is provided by the supervising Unit Servant.
  - \* If at all, a senior may decide to be present only at crucial times (e.g., during the CLS orientation, baptism in the Spirit, dedication).
  - \* If the senior decides to attend some sessions, he/she does not have to be present the whole time of the session.
3. One-to-one meetings (or two-on-two) between leader and member can be scheduled on regular household meeting days, say an hour before the start of the household meeting. The household leader(s) can meet with the host in their/his/her home.
4. For couples, the men do not have to bring their wives along for every service activity (e.g., giving a talk).
  - \* Not all services in MFC need to be done by the couple.
  - \* In fact, bringing his wife along all the time could make it more difficult for the husband to serve more, because the wife, knowing that she also has to give more time, could object. On the other hand, if she can just stay at home and be with the children, both she and their children may be more encouraging in allowing the husband to serve the Lord more.
5. Teaching nights can be in lieu of regular household meetings, assuming the whole household is on the same teaching track.

Now if leaders still find the totality of their life and service in MFC an intolerable burden, the solution is not to neglect the required activities (e.g., no longer go to prayer assemblies; no longer do household visitations), but to take a service that is not as demanding, or to give up service altogether (at least in the meantime).

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(SG. Jan 31, 2021)

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<sup>5</sup> That is, the elders of MFC, starting from the Chapter Servant and upward.