

RELIGION

Bible linked to business

A group provides advice to firms on Christianity and making profits.

Terry O. Roen | Sentinel Staff Writer

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DeLAND -- Business and religion rarely mix, except in a monthly meeting of CEOs who discuss biblical principles in the workplace.

The C12 Group, a for-profit organization for business owners, started in DeLand last March. Its founders are hoping to launch a branch in Daytona Beach and then move into the Orlando area. The group serves as a resource for business education, encouragement and Christian accountability.

David Seilkop, CEO of Affordable Home Funding in DeLand, said he was "maxed out physically and mentally" when the group advised him to hire two employees to share his duties and now he feels his time is better managed handling the growing business.

"It has already paid for itself," said Seilkop, referring to the \$450 monthly dues. "They [the members] give good, practical advice because they've been in the same situations. They tell it like it is and don't sugarcoat anything."

Seilkop, who joined in May, said everyone in the group says they don't have time to take a day off each

month to meet, but they all make time for it.

"You don't always run into successful people doing business the right way," he said.

Randy Harrod, Seilkop's accountant, discovered the C12 Group when he did a Google search for Christian men's business organizations. He prayed about the information he discovered on the C12 Group Web site and went through training at the organization's headquarters in Greensboro, N.C., in January. Three months later, he started a group in DeLand.

The group of five CEOs meets on the third Thursday of the month to participate in business-coaching sessions, learn how to run their businesses according to the Bible and focus their bottom line on spiritual values.

"It is an opportunity for like-minded people to gather and discuss ways to pull faith into the workplace," said Harrod, who serves as the local chairman of the C12 Group. "This is an accountability group of Christian advisers."

C12 Group members pay dues ranging from \$450 to \$850 a month, depending on the revenue of their company. Harrod said members receive a core business plan on their company and have access to peer reviews and information on how to minister to employees, customers and vendors.

The founder of the C12 Group, which originated on Florida's Gulf Coast in 1992, worked for Fellowship of Companies for Christ International before he decided to start his own company with more of a business edge.

Buck Jacobs, chairman of the C12 Group, said there are more than 400 businesses involved in 30 groups meeting in 15 states.

"We provide study materials with state-of-the-art business techniques and help CEOs develop strong, vibrant businesses as the best way to represent the Lord," said Jacobs, who lives in Cornelia, Ga.

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