

Series - The Rise Of The Church

Date/s - 03 April 2016

Topic - The Glorious Church

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "One Thing Remains (Your Love Never Fails)", "Build Your Kingdom Here", "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the important pillars that build the church
2. Be inspired to be part of growing God's church by being missional

Word [45 min]

Ps Ernie Song introduced the sermon series titled "The Rise Of The Church" by providing an overview of the series and giving a background on the Book of Acts (Acts 1:1-14, 2:1-14 & 2:36-47). When Jesus resurrected, He defeated the power of sin and death for all mankind. The disciples who were confused and lost after the crucifixion changed their perspectives after Jesus' resurrection. After Jesus ascended to heaven, Peter preached his first sermon and 3,000 were saved in the Jerusalem Harvest. The Church was born! How did the Apostles know what to do next? They were disciples of Christ and saw how Jesus taught. Being a disciple of Christ simply means to emulate or to copy the master - to take on Jesus' ways.

There are four pillars of the early church and these should be the pillars for any healthy church. They are:

A. Transformation and Discipleship - Acts 2:42 talks about the early church devoting themselves to learning the Apostles' teaching, sharing, breaking bread and praying together. We are called to be disciples, not just a churchgoer. A true disciple is a growing disciple - the responsibility is ours individually. What matters to God is not just what happens on a Sunday but what we do on the other days of the week as well. In the church, we must grow strong disciples of Christ. See 1 John 2:6.

B. Authentic Community - Acts 2:44 talks about all the believers being together. No one stands alone. We must do our faith in the context of community as we have one Father and we are in one Spirit, which in Hawaiian culture is referred to as "Ohana" meaning family. Sanctification is a community project and we must learn to love one another as Christ loves us. Ps Ernie exhorted us to be united and do not let the Devil has a foothold in the church through gossips, murmuring, half-truths, untruths and disharmony. We must check our speech, thoughts and actions to build one another up.

C. Culture of Prayer - Acts 1:14 talks about the early church joining together constantly in prayer. There is power when we pray in agreement - Matthew 18:19-20. We must intercede and pray for the needs in our midst, our community and beyond.

D. Missional Living - the church is called to be beyond just a resounding cymbal bearing little relevance to the lives of the community. The church needs to be missional. The church must be part of something immense - we are called to make a difference and to influence the community for Christ. We must remember that we are ambassadors of Christ - see Romans 10:14-15.

Ps Ernie then traced our heritage, as a church, through history from the persecution of the early church mentioned in Acts 8. Through the spreading of the Gospel by Philip, the Apostle, many came to the faith. This later led to the conversion of the Emperor Constantine who embraced Christianity for the Roman Empire. With this, Christianity spread to Britain and later, to China by missionaries. Though there were difficulties encountered in China with the massacre of missionaries during the Boxer Rebellion, God turned it around. There was strong church growth and many missionaries brought the Gospel to different parts of Asia including Singapore. Ultimately, it led to the birth of RiverLife Church. We therefore have a rich heritage brought about by the sacrifices, labour of love and hardship of many who had gone before us. The church is precious to Christ and God has indeed been faithful to us! May those who come after us find us faithful.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Acts 2:36-47. What do you like about the early church which has left an impression on you? Briefly, share why.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This question is an ice-breaker and acts as a recap of the main points of the sermon. Encourage members to share their perspectives and discuss briefly on these views. The pillars of the early church can serve as a good framework to summarise the key points.*

2. **1 John 2:6 says: "Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did" and Acts 2:42 tells of the early church members' devotion. The church is not a building and is not meant to be simply a gathering of churchgoers. From personal situation/experience, relate what you are doing now that emulate Jesus or would like to emulate Him.** [10 min]

Leader's notes: *This is a relate question. Members can share on what being devoted to Christ means in their own personal situation / experience. All Christians are called to be disciples and not to be a passive churchgoer. A true disciple is a growing disciple who thirst and hunger for more of God. The responsibility for spiritual growth resides with each one of us individually. Furthermore, we must be devoted to emulate Christ each day of the week and not just on a Sunday. God wants us to be strong and matured disciples of Christ not only in the church but in the world as well. Encourage members to pray to God to help them increase their commitment level for their own spiritual growth.*

3. **Pastor Ernie Song mentioned that the early church had four pillars: (a) transformation & discipleship; (b) authentic community; (c) culture of prayer; and (d) missional living. They are equally relevant to a small group of believers and to the individual so as to build a strong foundation for God's Kingdom. Reflect which of these you need to apply more in your own life and in your cell group.** [15 min]

Leader's notes: *This is a reflect and response question. Encourage members to consider what they can do at an individual level and connect these to what they can also help the church to do as a family. Remind members that sanctification is a community project (no Christian should walk alone) and that authentic community which involves doing life together will keep you, the cell group and the church strong, relevant and vibrant.*

Encourage members to pray and intercede for one another in areas of need. The church is not a building or an organization. It is a family of brothers and sisters who love one another as Christ loves us. Read

*Romans 10:14-15 to inspire each member to see himself/herself as an ambassador for Christ, as they serve the community wherever God places him/her in.
God wants us to be missional in our focus. The church is precious to Him. Christ's church is glorious because it reflects God's love and glory.*

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every Riverlifers to be an ambassador for Christ, representing Lord Jesus correctly and spreading His fragrance wherever we are.

Announcements

1. **"AWAKENING – Sons & Daughters Arise!"** (RiverLife Camp 2016, Sign up by 17 Apr)
Fri to Mon, 10-13 Jun [4D/3N] Hotel Equatorial Melaka, Malaysia
Approach the Camp Counter at Fellowship Atrium this Sunday for more details.
2. **PRECEPT BIBLE STUDY CLASS**
Tuesdays, 19 Apr–24 May | 8-10pm
Topic 2: Being A Disciple – Counting The Real Cost
Register online at www.riverlife.org.sg or at the Cell Connection Counter by next Sun, 10 Apr. For more information, please contact Christine Tan at 65115145, or email her at christinetan@riverlife.org.sg.