

Series - Better Together (1/10)

Date/s - 28 May 2017

Topic - Walking Together - 1

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/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

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**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs that speak about the Church e.g. One Voice

**Spiritual Objectives**

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

1. Reflect on the importance of community in our spiritual growth
2. Identify obstacles to committing to a cell and how to overcome it
3. Commit to growing together with the fellowship of the saints

**Word** [45 min]

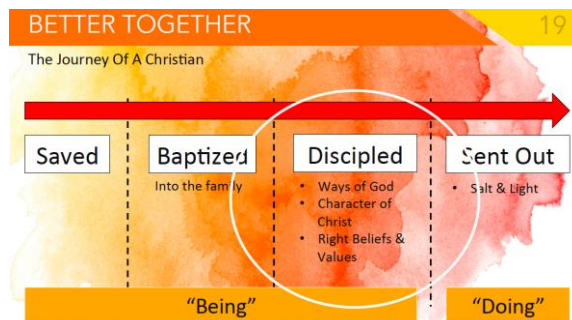
Pastor Ernie shared the background of Ephesus

- It was located at the western part of Turkey. It was the leading city of the richest region in the Roman Empire, the greatest commercial city in Asia. Multi-ethnic with sizeable Jewish population.
- The primary god the people worshipped there was Artemis of Ephesus, and they worshipped up to 50 gods. It was famous as a centre of magical arts
- The church of Ephesus was started by Paul and his team of 12 (Acts 19). It was a famed centre for Christianity in Asia Minor during AD 50. They were known for being hardworking, persevering and spiritually discerning but lacked their first love (Rev 2:1-7)
- The main challenges the church faced were 1) Practical unity of the Jews and Gentiles 2) Differing theologies and 3) Hellenistic culture.

Paul's purpose of writing the letter was 1) To give new converts grounding in the gospel and 2) To help and admonish believers to cultivate a distinctively Christian lifestyle. In the first three chapters, Paul wrote about how Christ had broken down every wall between the Jews and the Gentiles, and how we are all saved by grace, and not by works. Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:1 to live a life worthy of God's calling.

Paul placed emphasis on the existence and unity of the Body of Christ because the Trinity models it for us. The main characteristic of the Trinity is relationship! We are created in God's image, and He has placed in us the ability to relate to one another, and this need to connect.

Pastor Ernie shared an overview of a Christian's journey, and shared to be in Christ is to be in His body (the believers). Discipleship and sanctification can only take place in the context of community.



“He works on us in all sorts of ways. But above all, He works on us through each other. Men are mirrors, or “carriers” of Christ to other men. Usually it is those who know Him that bring Him to others. That is why the church, the whole body of Christians showing Him to one another, is so important.” – C.S. Lewis

### Why is Spiritual Community Essential to the Christian Life?

1. Absorption of kingdom values and formation of belief system  
The spiritual community is the incubator (Acts 2:42-47) where we learn about kingdom values and our belief systems are formed.
2. Safety net in a culturally oppressive society  
Pastor Ernie shared that in this world, sin is painted as pleasurable. We are all weak and broken, and the propensity to sin is much higher when we are alone. He also shared the examples of Charles Parham, a great healing evangelist and William Seymour (the Azusa Street Revival). Though Charles Parham was serving God in great measure, he did not finish well. The difference was because he did many things alone and did not have community to keep him accountable in his walk with God.
3. The receiving and giving of ministry (love)  
Pastor Ernie drew an illustration of the believer as a tree. The soil is the community, and as we grow deep roots in the community, it enables the tree to receive nourishment and to stand during the storms.

### Obstacles towards Spiritual Community

1. Fear
  - People may be concerned that spending time to grow in a spiritual community may result in the loss of time that may be spent on children, work, chores and opportunities. Pastor Ernie exhorted the church to work out our priorities as we grow in our Christian walk
  - People may feel ashamed and may fear that they will not be accepted. As we grow in a community, we learn that we are loved, and perfect love casts out fear.
2. Pride
  - People may have grown up under a heritage of independence and may not be comfortable learning to depend on others.
3. Culture of instant gratification
  - Having a spiritual community is hard work that requires time.

### Moving Forward (our response)

1. Find your Spiritual Community (Cell)
2. Find your Spiritual Director
3. Invest time into your community

Here are some links that were mentioned in the “sermon series overview” handout:

- <http://m.christianity.com/christian-life/spiritual-growth/don-t-go-it-alone-you-were-made-for-community.html>
- [www.onfaith.co/onfaith/2015/03/24/5-reasons-christians-need-the-local-church/36441](http://www.onfaith.co/onfaith/2015/03/24/5-reasons-christians-need-the-local-church/36441)
- [www.boundless.org/faith/2013/6-ways-to-get-more-out-of-your-small-group](http://www.boundless.org/faith/2013/6-ways-to-get-more-out-of-your-small-group)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Community is God’s idea. Pastor Ernie shared three points about the importance of community in the believer’s life. Share with the cell about your experience of community – what did you enjoy about it?** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A recap question for members to share what they imagine community to be. Leaders can get members to share a time they were ministered to in community, or a time they enjoyed doing something together as a cell. Leaders can also ask members to share from the three points that Pastor Ernie gave – how being in the community helped them grow in Christ, kept them accountable and enabled them to give and receive.

2. **Ps Ernie shared about three obstacles believers face in building their spiritual community. Do you relate with any of these? How did you overcome it?** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A relate question for members to share about their experiences on the struggles they faced and what happened helps or is helping them to overcome it. The three obstacles shared by Ps Ernie were 1. Fear (Loss of time) and Shame, 2. Pride, 3. Culture of instant gratification. Members could choose to share about other obstacles as well.

3. **Read Ephesians 4:1-6, Hebrews 10:24-25. Pastor Ernie shared that “Discipleship and sanctification can only take place in the context of community.” Share your thoughts / reflections about it.** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A reflect question. Leaders can also ask members what their idea of “discipleship” and “sanctification” and what the importance of these things is in our walk with God. Leaders can also get members to think about the possible ways community facilitates these two things – see the diagram in the synopsis. The Trinity is a vivid model of relationship. Jesus had twelve disciples because it is His nature to relate to them.

4. **What are things the cell can do to grow together in Christ? Choose one / two steps you want to take up in response to this.** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** This is a response question. Leaders can also get members to reflect on the illustration of the tree Pastor Ernie gave. What is the quality of the community / soil we want to be deeply rooted in, how can we contribute to it? Leaders can choose to get members to think about practical ways to help the cells grow, and to choose one or two things to focus on. Leaders can also get members to pray for our church, especially for the leadership.

### **Works** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Commitment to grow in Christ together with the fellowship of believers.

2. Strength and courage to overcome obstacles in building our spiritual community.

### **Announcements**

1. **Seminar on Depression by Dr Leslie Lim**

Sat, 24 June | 2:00pm- 5:00pm | RiverLife Church

Cost: Freewill offering

Register with Christine Tan at [christinetan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:christinetan@riverlife.org.sg) latest by Sun, 11 June

2. **SPCYes**

SPIRITUAL PARENTING OF YOUNG COUPLES

Sundays | 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 Jul | 1.45-4.15pm (Lunch is provided at 1.45pm.)

\$40 Per Person | RiverLife Church (Classrooms 207 & 208)

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 18 Jun. For enquiries, please contact Christine Tan at 65114141 or email her at [christinetan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:christinetan@riverlife.org.sg)

3. **Precept**

Spiritual Warfare: Overcoming The Enemy

Dates: 4, 11, 18, 25 Jul, 1 & 8 Aug

Course Material: \$11 (RiverLifers) | \$16 (Non-RiverLifers)

Register at the Information Counter or online at [www.riverlife.org.sg](http://www.riverlife.org.sg) by Sun, 25 Jun. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at 65114142, or email her at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg).