

Series - Better Together (2/10)

Date/s - 4 June 2017

Topic - Walking Together – Part 2 of 2

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]

Suggested songs:

You are good (Bethel), King of my heart, My God reigns, Jesus shall take the highest honour

Spiritual Objectives

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

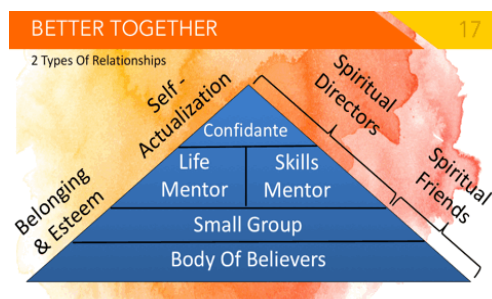
1. Consider the state of their Cell Group; and
2. Commit to move forward together as a Cell Group.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Ernie Song started by doing a recap on the first week sermon which covered the "why" of community. The focus of his sermon this week is the "how" of community. The Book of Ephesians was written while Paul was in prison in Rome and when he knew that he would never see the church in Ephesus again. This letter, which was his last message to the church in Ephesus, taught on the spiritual community. See Ephesians 4:1-6.

What makes a community spiritual? What is the difference? Our biological family can be characterised by the bonds of DNA and the way we live our life. Similarly, the DNA in the church is the unity as a spiritual family in our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. What sets us apart from the world's idea of community is how we do *family* life in our church community. The end goal of every spiritual community should be to show forth the glory of God!

Pastor Ernie outlined the 2 types of relationships that we need on our spiritual journey: Spiritual Friends and Spiritual Directors, described in the chart below.



Dr Timothy Keller was quoted as saying "the need for spiritual friendships is not a sign of maturity, but rather of spiritual health." Pastor Ernie urged parents to place greater emphasis on giving our children a spiritual community because if they are part of a spiritual community, they will likely get to know Jesus and they will have the gift of eternal life! This outweighs other gifts we can provide as parents. A good academic education

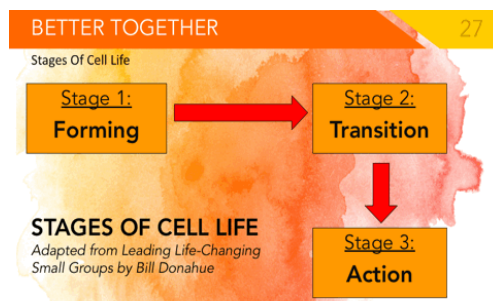
can at most give our children a good job and a life of comfort.

The spiritual community is modelled for us in the early church - see Acts 2:42-47. In this passage, the teaching was done in a large setting but the breaking of bread and prayers were conducted in a small and intimate setting. Only in such intimate settings that deeper and authentic relationships can be formed and nurtured. We must move beyond having only congregational gatherings to build deep relationships in a small-group setting. Pastor Ernie listed 3 main points on what Cell is not:

- a. Cell is not purely Bible Study, even though we do Bible Study.
- b. Cell is not purely Fellowship, even though we fellowship in cell.
- c. Cell is not purely Sermon Discussion, even though we discuss the sermon in cell.

Cell is basically about **doing life together as a spiritual community**. In Acts 2:42-47, we see the early church met daily. Similarly, Cell members need to invest time to be together and stay connected through the week. This goes beyond the Cell meeting time of 2 hours a week. Cell members should encourage each other and have life-to-life connections so that Christian culture and values can be practised and transmitted.

Pastor Ernie covered the three general stages of Cell Life. The chief goal of the Cell is to show the glory of God and being an outreaching community.



1. Forming: the questions asked by members are "Who is in my group and can I fit in here?". The Cell tends to be program-based and Cell-leader dependent. The sharing tends to be more shallow and superficial. However if the Cell stays too long at this stage, the Cell will remain shallow, inward looking and depending only on the Cell leader. How to move out of this stage? Cell members should do our part to do more to (a) invest our time - making Cell our priority; (b) take the initiative to stay connected and have deeper relationships; and (c) be more open and vulnerable to one another. See Hebrews 10:24-25 - "... let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works ..." and 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 on Paul's exhortation for us to move on to "solid food."
2. Transition: the questions Cell members ask are "How can I contribute and can we be open with one another?". Sharing is at a deeper level, members are involved in the lives of one another and members own the Cell life. However if the Cell stay too long at this stage, the Cell will become a closed community. How to move to the next stage? Cell members should do more to (a) pray for and with one another; and (b) use their gifts to build and enrich the Cell life.
3. Action: Cell members will ask "What can we do together?" and everyone is an active contributor. The world around the members are impacted because of the Cell. The glory of God goes out to the world. This would lead to multiplication, not simply for the pursuit of numbers but to reach more people for Jesus Christ and to be aligned with God's heart.

Pastor Ernie encouraged Cells to reflect on which stage we are in and how we can move forward together as a Cell. There must be more! We must allow God to do something more in our community!

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor Ernie mentioned that the church is not just an organisation, but more importantly, it is a family. With this in mind, what would you expect of the church community? What makes it spiritual? [10 min]

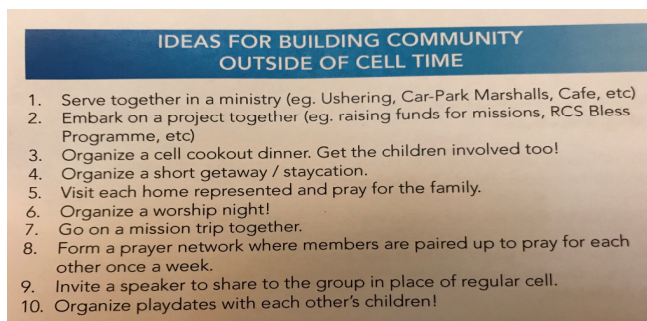
Leader's Notes: This is a recap and ice-breaking question. In a family, relationships matter most - not mission, strategy and programmes. Similarly, church members are grafted to Christ as our DNA. See Ephesians 4:1-6. As a spiritual community, we are called to be different from how the world views community. See John 13:34-35. It is through love for one another that the world shall know that we are Jesus' disciples. We can only show love to one another by doing life together as His church. This will bring glory to God!

2. In his book on "Leading Life-changing Small Groups", Bill Donahue described three stages of Cell Life: Forming, Transition and Action. As a Cell group, discuss which stage is your cell in? [15 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a relate & reflect question. As outlined by Pastor Ernie, which is also summarised in the synopsis, talk about the types of interaction members have in the Cell. Is the Cell inclined to focus on programme and Cell leader dependent? Are members involved in one another's lives? Is the sharing deep and authentic? Do members stay connected other than the regular "Cell group" time? Leaders can also ask members to consider what they would like to see more in the Cell. Each member can briefly identify one or two specific areas of improvements that the Cell can make.

3. Having shared the stage that the Cell is in, how can you move forward together as a cell? [15 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a response question. Leaders can reiterate that Cell life should not be limited to Bible Study, fellowship and Sermon discussion. Depending on the stage of the Cell life, members can be encouraged to do more to contribute to the Cell life in the ways suggested by Pastor Ernie. Leaders can also remind members of Hebrews 10:24-25 to build one another up in love. Practical ideas for building community outside of cell time include:



At a deeper relational level, see James 5:16 (confess sins and pray for one another), Galatians 6:2 (carry each other's burden), Hebrews 13:16 (care for each other's practical needs), 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (warn each other of sin) and Romans 12:15 (rejoice and mourn with each other) – adapted from www.toshowthemjesus.com by Christina Fox, a counsellor and writer. Pray over the commitments shared by members on moving forward!

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every cell member to be more involved in one another's lives, sharing authentically and staying connected throughout the week.

Announcements**1. 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**2. 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 by Sun, 25 Jun. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at 65114142, or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.**3. 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Sun, 25 Jun | 2.30pm | Victory Chapel