

Series - Going Deeper – The Manner of Spiritual Parenting

Date/s - 10 March 2019

Scripture - 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

Speaker - Pastor Dinah Lee

### 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 >

### Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “Cornerstone”, “Have A Song”, “When Jesus Comes Again” or “Build My Life”.

### Spiritual Objectives

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

1. Reflect on the traits of being spiritual parents
2. Be encouraged to grow deeper in God through discipleship.

### Word [45 min]

Pastor Dinah preached about the manner of spiritual parenting from 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 (NASV).

The impact comes when we make Christ the centre of our lives and let Him live in and out through us. We all start off as infants, grow into spiritual adults and then spiritual parents. We become spiritual parents when we reproduce our spiritual life in helping others grow. (1 John 2:12 -14)

Pastor Dinah spoke about two metaphors of spiritual parenting:

First metaphor: To serve like loving mothers (v 7-8)

1. 1<sup>st</sup> trait: Love with care and tenderness (1 Peter 5:3) A baby is unable to fend for himself and needs someone to assume the role of the spiritual parent – to teach, guide and love him.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> trait: Love with life impartation and sacrifice (v.8): It takes genuine love for people to blossom. In the passage, Paul writes “...shared our lives with you”. Discipleship takes decision making and attitude of thoughts.

Pastor Dinah also shared that many of us often do the safe thing. We keep a distance and do not do what is personal. We clamp our hearts and do not let anyone in. However, members who are being discipled desire for their spiritual parents to be up close and personal with them. Though we share our opinions on the Word, there is no way a person is impacted if we do not share our lives and do not allow ourselves to love and be loved. To give the gospel without the willingness to give of ourselves is a contradiction. Pastor Dinah shared about Paul giving up his “rights” in order to address their needs.

Second metaphor: To serve like concerned fathers (v 9-12)

1. 1<sup>st</sup> trait: His work is diligent. Pastor Dinah shared about Paul’s example of personal sacrifice (2 Thessalonians 3:8-9 and Acts 20:34). She also shared positive and negative examples relating to the limited carpark lots for Sunday services and pointed through that these examples that life is more than living for ourselves; and we have the capacity to grow.

2. 2<sup>nd</sup> trait: His walk is consistent – his walk is holy, righteous and blameless (v.10). It is important to walk right with God. We also need to know that being blameless does not mean sinless – it is important to be honest in our inner core. We need to be role models and are unable to motivate, inspire or communicate what we do not have (Titus 2:7).
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> trait: His words are encouraging (vv. 11-12). Our words can take on a variety of tones - exhorting, encouraging and imploring. Pastor Dinah also shared a video about the Virtual Reality church by John B. Crist ([https://youtu.be/R\\_bkNkrWdz8](https://youtu.be/R_bkNkrWdz8)). She highlighted that it is important for leaders and members to have personal contact - modern technology is unable to replace the face-to-face way of imparting truth and love, because we are embodied spirits made in God's image. In-depth spiritual instruction and transfer of spiritual values require close relationship – which requires personal presence (3 John 13-14).

Pastor Dinah also shared a quote from Douglas Grootuis in *The Soul in Cyberspace* – “...the kind of community required for the resuscitation of (spiritual) life requires the grace that comes through the human touch, the human voice, the human gaze. Genuine community shines through the human presence of truth expressed personally.”

The purpose of spiritual parenting is to encourage every believer “to walk in a manner worthy of God...” Spiritual parents parent so that disciples can learn to bring God in every sphere of the living.

Spiritual parenting is a relationship that results in reproducing mature Christians called disciples - spurring one another so that we can know Christ more and become like Him. We need to know that the church is not a perpetual spiritual day care centre. Jesus' model of the church is a growing and developing family and every Christian is to become a spiritual parent. Making an impact on lives is not a formula, but it stems from people being deeply rooted in Christ. Pastor Dinah also exhorted members to consider what maturity looks like and if the way we relate with people is tender, loving, servant-hearted and life-giving.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **What to you, is a “disciple of Christ”, “spiritual maturity” and “spiritual parenting”? How does spiritual parenting play a role in growing disciples of Christ?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *This is a recap question. Leaders can get members to brainstorm and list down what are the characteristics of a disciple, what are some qualities of spiritual maturity as well as the topic of spiritual parenting. The list is meant for the members to come together to have a common understanding of these three terms as they continue with the discussion during cell. It is a growing list and it is important to note that this is not meant to be a list of perfect answers. The hope of stating down the various characteristics is that it can continue to spur believers to grow in their faith, and not feel overwhelmed if they are not able to meet up to standards. Leaders will need to facilitate and guide members on what the key tenets of our faith are while acknowledging that we are all still growing in the faith.*

2. **Please refer to Ps Dinah's first point on “serving like loving mothers”. How does this guide you on the idea of being a spiritual parent? Share your thoughts with the cell.** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *A relate and reflect question on how spiritual parents are to love and care for the people under their care. Leaders may choose to ask members to reflect about times where they were discipled with care and tenderness, life impartation and sacrifice. Leaders can get members to share a time of how someone showed them an example of spiritual parenting. Leaders can also deepen the questions by asking members how this may have influenced/shaped them in their future interactions with younger believers.*

3. Please refer to the second point on “serving like concerned fathers”. How does this guide you in the way a spiritual parent should live? Share your thoughts with the cell. [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** A relate and reflect question on how spiritual parents are to lead in example. Like the previous question, leaders can ask members to reflect on the spiritual parents they interacted with - how did they work with diligence, have a consistent walk and encourage in speech. Members can also share an example from their experiences. Leaders can also deepen the discussion by getting the cell to think about how they can continue to inspire and keep each other accountable in growing in this manner worthy of the Lord.

4. Where are you now in terms of your spiritual maturity? Share with your cell how you would like to continue growing in your faith – e.g. to be disciplined by other mature believers, to serve in a cell or ministry, or be a spiritual parent to younger believers.

**Leader’s Notes:** A response question. Francis Chan in his inspiring 20-minute documentary (<https://bit.ly/2HhpXsS>) warns people about the church’s culture of consumerism. We are challenged on what church is supposed to look like by thinking about what God intends the church to look like. The church should not be a consumer transaction as we are meant to serve not be served. We are encouraged to reject the practice of treating church like a transaction where people care more about what they can get out of it and not how they can give to it. We are meant to serve, prompted by the love of Christ! Members can break into groups to share about where they are at in their spiritual growth, be it to be disciplined or to be a spiritual parent. Members can also share how they can keep each other accountable in the faith and to pray for each other.

**Works** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Thank God for His faithfulness and provision, and His sovereignty over our future.
2. Every RiverLifer to make God the centre of their lives and to step out in faith to do His work.

**Announcements**

1. **Joining the Family, Saturday, 30 Mar | 1:30 – 4:30pm | Faith Chapel**

Joining the Family class will help you to understand God’s heart for the Church and His call for us to be identified with a local body of believers. This is a pre-requisite for Associate Membership. Sign up at the Information Counter or online at [bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily](http://bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily) by Sun, 17 Mar.

**Church Vision:**

A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.

**Mission:**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.